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THE
PLEASANTNESS
OF A

Religious Life,

Open'd and Prov'd ;

AND

Recommended to the
Consideration of All ;

Particularly of

Young People.

By *MATTHEW HENRY*,
Minister of the Gospel.

L O N D O N,

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19



BY MATTHEW WALKER
Master of the College

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To the READER.

THAT Distinction, which the Learned Dr. Henry More insists so much upon, in his Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness, between the Animal Life and the Divine Life, is certainly of great Use to lead us into the Understanding of that Mystery. What was the Fall and Apostacy of Man, and what is still his Sin and Misery, but the Soul's Revolt from the Divine Life, and giving up itself wholly to the Animal Life? And what was the Design of our Redeemer, but to recover us to the Divine and Spiritual Life again by the Influences of his Grace? And to this his Gospel has a direct Tendency; His Religion is all Spiritual and Divine, while all other Religions savour of the Animal Life. Christianity (saith he) is that Period of the Wisdom and Providence of God, wherein the Animal Life is remarkably insulted, and triumphed over by the Divine. Book 2. Ch. 7. And so far, and no further, are we Christians indeed, as this Revolution is brought about in our Souls.

The Conflict is between these two; Nothing draws more forcibly than Pleasure: In order, therefore, to the Advancing of the Interests of the Divine Life in myself and others,

I have here endeavour'd as God has enabled me, to make it evident, that the Measures of the Divine Life are infinitely better, and more deserving than those of the Animal Life: Were People convinc'd of this we should gain our Point.

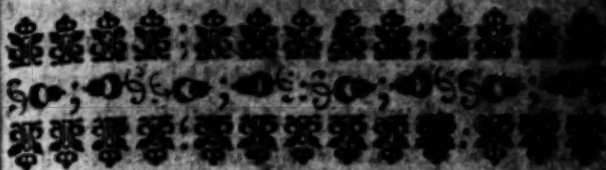
The Substance of this was preach'd Last Year in Six Sermons, in the ordinary Course of my Ministry, among many other Reasons why we should be Religious; I was then solicit'd to make it Publick, and now take this Opportunity to prepare it for the Press, when through the good Hand of my God upon me, I have finish'd my Fifth Volume of Expositions, before I go about the Sixth. And herein, I confess, I indulge an Inclination of my own; for this Doctrine of the Pleasantsness of Religion is what I have long had a particular Kindness for, and taken all Occasions to mention. Yet I should not thus far have gratify'd either my Friends Request, or my own Inclination, if I had not thought, that by the Blessing of God, it might be of some Service to the Common Interest of Christ's Kingdom, and the Common Salvation of Precious Souls.

M. H.

May 31.

1714

Reformation is brought about in our Souls. The Comfort is derived from these two; We think divine more forcibly than Pleasures in vain, therefore, to the Advancing of the Interest of the Divine Life in myself and others.



PROV. iii. 17.

Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.

TRUE Religion and Godliness is often in Scripture, and particularly in this Book of the Proverbs, represented, and Prov. 1. 1. so recommended to us under the Name 7. 20. and Character of *Wisdom*; because it is 2. 2. 10. the highest Improvement of the *Human* 3. 13. *Nature*, and the best and surest Guide of Ps. 119. 105. *Human Life*. It was one of the first, and most ancient Discoveries of God's Mind to the Children of Men, to the Inquisitive Part of them that are in Search for Wisdom, and would have it at any Rate; then when God made a Weight for the Winds, and a Decree for the Rain, when he brought all the other Creatures under the Establish'd Rule, and Law of their Creation, according to their respective Capacities, then he declar'd this to Man, a reasonable Creature, as the Law of his Creation, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil, the Evil of Sin, is Understanding.

B

The

The Learned Men of the World are
engrossed in Wealth and Honor, and
tenders to Wisdom, and therefore
so well for themselves as they do for
their Neighbours. And when
Mat 49:13. their Poverty, that reap the fruit
of their Worldly Wisdom, approve their
ings, yet in their Way is their Folly; and
it will appear, when God himself
Luke 12:20. shall visit those Fools, who said to the
Satan, Let your Eye, be Earn full
Jer 17:11. Corn, and Bags full of Money.

The Learned Men of the World are
Well-wishers to Wisdom, and modestly
call'd themselves scholars. They
of Wisdom, and many wise Principles
have from them, and wise Principles
of Philosophy said that it was
man's great Duty and highest
honour, to acquaint himself with
God, and Keeping up Conversation
with him; herein they that profess
Rom 1:22. to be wise became Fools, and
Col 2:3. Wisdom knew not God.

But such as are, without doubt
the truly wise Men, to whom Christ
has given Wisdom, in whom he has
given them, but for them, all the
of Wisdom and Knowledge; they under-
stand themselves best, and on which
Side their Interest lies, that give
themselves to the Conduct of God,
and by Word and Example will
in Oracle, and give themselves
to them, which are, indeed, the true
Cor 2:10. Oracles of Reason. Men never
be wise, till they begin to be Religious.

and they then leave off to be more; when
they leave off to do good.

Psalm 36. 3.

Now I recommend to us the Study
and Practice of this true Wisdom, to
bring us into a willing Subjection to her
Authority, and keep us to a conscien-
tious Observance of her Dictates, the
Great God is here by Solomon reasoning
with us, from those Topicks, which in
other Cases use to be cogent, and com-
manding enough; It is wonderful Con-
descension, that He who has an in-
disputable Authority over us, thus
vouchsafes to reason with us; to draw us
with the Cords of a Man, and the Bands
of Love, when he might make use only
of the Cords of a God, and the Bands
of the Law; to invite us to that by pre-
cious Promises, which he enjoins upon
us by his Precepts, and those not gratis.

Hos 11. 4.

Psalm 2. 3.

1 John 5. 3.

Interest is the great Governess of the
World; which when Men are once con-
vinced of, they will be swayed by more
than by any thing else; every One is
for what he can get, and therefore ap-
plies himself to that which he thinks he
can get by; the common Enquiry is,
Who will shew us any good? We would
all be happy, would all be easy.

Psalm 4. 6.

Now it is here demonstrated by Eter-
nal Truth itself, That it is our Interest
to be Religious, and, therefore, Religion
deserves to be called Wisdom; because
it teaches us to do well for ourselves;
and it is certain, That the Way to be
happy, that is, perfectly *Wise*, hereafter,

Ver. 13.

Qui profert
intelligenti-
am.Mal. 3. 15.
Psal. 10. 4.

is to be *Holy*, that is, truly *Happy*, now. It is laid down for a Principle here, *Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom*, that finds the Principles and Habits of it planted in his own Soul by Divine Grace, that having diligently sought, has at length found that Pearl of great Price, and the Man that getteth Understanding, and reckons himself therein a true Gainer. The Man that draws out Understanding, so the Original Word signifies; that produceth it, and brings it forth; and so the Chaldee reads it, — Happy is the Man, that having a good Principle in him, makes Use of it both for his own, and others Benefit; that having laid up, lays out.

It is necessary to our being *Happy*, that we have right Notions of *Happiness*; the Nature of it, wherein it consists, what are the Ingredients of it, and what the Ways that lead to it; for many keep themselves miserable by thinking themselves happy, when really they are not; and we have Reason to suspect their Mistake concerning themselves, because they mistake so grossly concerning others; They call the Proud happy; They bless the Covetous whom the Lord abhors. It concerns us, therefore, to consider, whence we take our Measures of Happiness, and what Rules we go by in Judging of it; that we may not covet our Lot with those, with whom we should dread to have our Lot; that we may not say as the Psalmist was tempted to say, when he look'd upon the

out-

outward Prosperity of Worldly People,
Happy is the People, that is in such a Case;
but as he was determin'd to say, when
he look'd upon the true Felicity of
Godly People, *Happy, thrice happy, for
ever happy, is that People, whose God is* *Psal. 144. 12.*
the Lord; and as God here saith, whose
Judgment, we are sure, is according
to Truth, *Happy is the Man that finds
Wisdom.*

The Happiness of those that are Reli-
gious is here prov'd,

1. From the true Profit that is to be
got by Religion; *Godliness is profitable to* *1 Tim. 4. 8.*
all Things, 'tis of universal Advantage.
Tho' we may be Losers for our Reli-
gion, yet we shall not only not be Losers
by it, but we shall be unspeakable Gain-
ers in the End. They that trade with
Wisdom's Talents, will find the Mer- *Ver. 14. 15.*
chandise of it better than the Merchandise
of Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine
Gold; and that it is more precious than
Rubies. As long since as Job's Time it
was agreed, that the Advantages of Re-
ligion were such, that as they could not
be purchas'd, so they could not be valu'd *Job 28. 16.*
with the Gold of Ophir, the precious Onyx, *19.*
or the Sapphire; The Topaz of Ethiopia
could not equal them, Length of Days is in
Wisdom's right Hand, even Life for
evermore; Length of Days, and no
Shortning of them, and in her left Hand
Riches and Honour, the unspeakable Riches
of Christ, and the Honour that comes from
God, which are true Riches, and true
Honours, because durable, because
B 3 Eternal,

Eternal, and for ever out of the Danger of Poverty, and Disgrace.

In all Labour there is Profit, more or less, of one kind or other, but no Profit like that in the Labour of Religion: They who make a Business of it, will find great Advantage by it; its present *Incomes* are valuable, and a comfortable, honourable Maintenance for a Soul, but its future *Recompences* infinitely more so, above what we are able either to speak, or think.

2. From the transcendent Pleasure that is to be found in it. Here's Profit and Pleasure twisted, which compleats the Happiness. *Omne tulit punctum, qui missit uita dulci.* Those that pursue the *Gains* of the World in Wealth and Riches, must be willing to deny themselves in their *Pleasures*; and they that will indulge themselves in their *Pleasures*, must be content not to get Money, but to spend it; As they that are *Covetous* know they must not be *Voluptuous*; so they that are *Voluptuous* leave no Room to be *Covetous*; but it is not so in the Profits and Pleasures of Religion: Here a Man may both get, and save the spiritual *Riches* of Divine Grace, and yet at the same time bathe in a full Stream of Divine Consolations, and be never the less a Holy *Epicure* in spiritual Delights, for his *Laying up Treasures in Heaven*; the Soul may even then dwell at *Ease*, when it is labouring most diligently for the *Meat* that endures to *Eternal Life*.

This

This is that which the Text speaks of; and both the *Profit* and *Pleasure* of Religion are put together in the next Words, *She is a Tree of Life*, both enriching and delighting to them that lay hold upon her; what Gain or Comfort like that of Life?

Ver. 18.

First, We are here assur'd, That her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness; not only pleasant Ways, but in the Abstract, Ways of Pleasantness, as if Pleasantness were confin'd to those Ways, and not to be found any where else; and the Pleasantness ariseth not from any foreign Circumstance, but from the innate Goodness of the Ways themselves. Or it notes the exceeding superlative Pleasantness of Religion; 'tis as pleasant as Pleasantness itself; They are Ways of Pleasantness, *Q. V.* 'tis the Word from which *Naomi* had her Name in the Day of her Prosperity, which afterwards she disclaim'd; *Call me not Naomi pleasant*, but *Marah bitter*. Think you hear Wisdom saying on the contrary, *Call me not Marah bitter*, as some have miscall'd me, but call me *Naomi, pleasant*. The Vulgar *Latin* reads it *Via pulchra*; Her Ways are beautiful Ways, Ways of Sweetness, so the *Chaldee*.

Ruth 1. 20.

Wisdom's Ways are so; i. e. The Ways which she has directed us to walk in, the Ways of her Commandments, those are such, as if we keep close to, and go on in, we shall certainly find true Pleasure and Satisfaction. Wisdom saith, *This is the Way walk in it, and you shall*

Isa, 30, 21.

not

not only find *Life* at the End, but *Pleasures* in the Way. That which is the *only right Way* to Happiness, we must resolve to travel, and to proceed, and persevere in it, whether it be fair or foul, pleasant or unpleasant; but it is a great Encouragement to a Traveller, to know that his Way is not only the *right Way*, but a *pleasant Way*, and such the Way to Heaven is.

Chap. 2. 3, 4. God had told us by *Solomon*, that we must cry after Knowledge, must give our Voice to Understanding, that we must seek it, and search for it, must spare no Cost, or Pains to get it; He had told us, that this Wisdom would restrain us, from the

Chap. 2, 12, 16. Way both of the *evil Man*, and of the *strange Woman*, that it would keep us from all the forbidden Pleasures of Sense; Now lest these Restraints from Pleasure, and Constraints to Piety and Labour, should discourage any from the Ways of Religion, he here assures us, not only that our Pains will be abundantly recompenc'd with the Profits of Religion, but the Pleasures we forego, will be abundantly balanc'd with the Pleasures we shall enjoy.

Secondly, It is added, That all her Paths are Peace. Peace is sometimes put for all good; here some take it for the Good of Safety, and Protection. Many Ways are pleasant, they are clean, and look smooth, but they are dangerous, either not sound at Bottom, or beset with Thieves; but the Ways of Wisdom have in them a holy Security, as well

well as a *holy Serenity*; and they that walk in them have God himself for their *Shield*, as well as their *Sun*, and are not only joyful in the *Hope of Good*, but are, or may be *quiet* also from the *Fear of Evil*.

But we may take it for the Good of *Pleasure and Delight*, and so it speaks the same with the former Part of the Verse, As there is *Pleasantness* in Wisdom's Ways, so there is *Peace* in all her Paths.

I. There is not only *Peace in the End* of Religion, but *Peace in the Way*. There is not only *Peace* provided as a *Bed*, for good Men to *lye down in* at Night, when their *Work* is done, and their *Warfare* is accomplish'd, They shall then enter into *Peace*, rest in their Beds; Isa. 57. 2. Mark the perfect Man, and behold the up-right, for the End of that Man is Peace; 'tis everlasting Peace: But there is also *Peace* provided as a *Shade*, for good Men to *work in* all Day, that they may not only do their *Work*, but do it with *Delight*; For even the *Work of Righteousness*, as well as its Reward, shall be *Peace*; and the immediate Effect of *Righteousness*, as well as its Issue at last, *Quietness and Assurance* for ever.

'Tis possible, that *War* may be the Way to *Peace*, *Sic quarimus Pacem*, thus we pursue *Peace*, is the best Motto to be engraven on Weapons of War; but it is the Glory of those who are truly Religious, that they not only seek *Peace*, but enjoy it; The *Peace of God* rules their Hearts, and by that Means keeps them,

them, and even while they are Travel-
lers they have Peace, tho' they are not
yet at home.

Rom. 3. 17.

Isa. 57. 20.

21.

Luke 10.

4. 7.

It is the Misery of the Carnal, Irre-
ligious World, that *the Way of Peace they*
have not known, for they are *like the trou-*
bled Sea; there is no Peace, *sith my God,*
to the Wicked. How can Peace be spoken
to them that are not the *Sons of Peace*?
to them that have not *Grace for the*
Work of Peace to fasten upon? They
may cry Peace to themselves, but there
is no true Peace either in their Way, or
in their End; To such I say, *What hast*

2 Kings 9.

18.

thou to do with Peace? turn thee behind me;
while in God's Name I speak Peace to
all that are in Covenant with the God of
Peace, to all the faithful Subjects of the
Prince of Peace, they have experimentally
known the Way of Peace, and to them I
say, *Go on, and prosper; Go on in Peace*,
for the God of Love and Peace is, and
will be with you.

2. There is not only this Peace in the
Way of Religion in general; but in the
particular *Paths* of that Way; View it
in the several Acts and Instances of it,
in the Exercise of every Grace, in the
Performance of every Duty, and you
will find, that what is said of the Body
of Christianity, is true of every Part of
it, 'tis Peace.

Cant. 1. 8.

The *Ways* of Religion are track'd as
Path-ways are; we go forth by the *Foot-*
steps of the Flock. 'Tis the good old Way
that all have walk'd in, that are gone
to Heaven before us, and this con-

but s

Dares to go on, and you shall find
Walk in the way, and you shall find
Rest to your souls. We go on in our
Way with the same mind, when
when we see things going before us, and
through which we are now passing,
ing the promise; let us but keep the
Path, and we shall not miss our Way.

The Chaldee reads it, *linera et mif-
fica*; her Journeys are Peace. The
Paths of Wisdom are not like Walls, in
a Garden, which we make use of for
Diverſion only, and an Amusement;
but like Tracks in a great Road, which
we preſs forward in, with Care and
Pains, as a Traveller to his Journey's
plus ultra Hill, 'till we come to our Jour-
ney's End. We muſt remember, that
in the Ways of Religion we are upon
our Journey, and 'tis a Journey of Buſi-
neſs, Buſineſs of Life and Death, and
therefore, we muſt not trifle, or loſe
Time; but muſt *lift up our Feet*, as *Gen. 29. 17.*
rob did, when Jacob went on his Way, in
the Morning he *lift up his Feet*; and
lift up his Feet, as *Ch. 17. 13.*
the Word of the Lord, and the Fear of
thor of the Lord, and the Fear of the Lord,
not take up ſtones, and ſet them up.
And tho' the Journey is long, and requires all this
Care and Labour, yet 'tis as pleaſant,
it is Peace, not ſtriving.

In the Ways of Religion and Godlineſs
taken generally, there are different
Paths, according to the different Senti-
ments of wiſe and good Men in the leſs
weighty Matters of the Law; but bleſ-
ſed

fed be God, every different Path is not a By-path; and if it be not, but keep within the same Hedges of Divine Truths and Laws, as to the Essentials of Religion, it may be, it shall be a Way of Peace; for both he that eateth, and he that eateth not, give God Thanks, and has Comfort in it. If we rightly understand that the Kingdom of God, the Way of Wisdom, is not Meat and Drink, we shall find it to be, which indeed it is, Rom. 14. 6. Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. 14. 17.

3. There is this Peace in all the Paths of Wisdom; in all the Instances of Pure and Undeiled Religion; look into them all, make Trial of them all, and you'll find there's none to be excepted against, none to be quarrel'd with; they are all uniform, and of a Piece; the same golden Thread of Peace and Pleasure runs through the whole Web of serious Godliness.

We cannot say so of this World; That all its Paths are Peace, however some of them may pretend to give the Mind a little Satisfaction; its Pleasures have their Allays; that which one thing sweetens, another comes presently and embitters. But as there is a Universal Rectitude in the Principles of Religion, I have esteem'd all thy Precepts concerning all Things to be right; All the Words of my Mouth are in Righteousness (saith Wisdom) and there is nothing froward or perverse in them; so there is a Universal Peace and Pleasure in the Practice of Religion; All our Paths,

Paths, if such as they should be, will be such as we could wish.

The Doctrine, therefore, contain'd in these Words is,

That True Piety hath True Pleasure in it. Or thus;

The Ways of Religion are Pleasant and Peaceful Ways.

CHAP. I.

The Explication of the Doctrine.

It is a plain Truth which we have here laid down, and there is little in it that needs Explication; 'T were well for us, if we would but as readily subscribe to the Certainty of it, as we apprehend the Sense and Meaning of it. Nor will any complain, that it is hard to be understood; but those who know no other Pleasures but those of Sense, and relish no other, and, therefore, resolve not to give Credit to it. Those who think, *How can this be*, that there should be Pleasure in Piety, will be ready to question, *What's the Meaning of this Doctrine?* and to call it a hard saying.

You know what Pleasure is, I hope, you know something what the Pleasure of the Mind is, a Pleasure which the Soul has the Sensation of. And do you

not know something what *Piety* is, a due Regard to a God above us, and having the Eyes of the Soul ever up unto him; and then you know what I mean when I say, That there is an Abundance of real Pleasure and Satisfaction, in the Ways of Religion and Godliness.

But to help you a little in the understanding of it, and to prevent Mistakes, observe,

First, That I speak of true *Piety*, and of that as far as it goes.

1. *Hypocrites* are very much Strangers to the Delights and Pleasures of Religion; nay, they are altogether so, for it is Joy which those Strangers do not intermeddle with. Counterfeit *Piety* can never bring in true Pleasure. He that acts a Part upon a Stage, tho' it be the Part of one that's never so pleasant, tho' he may humour the Pleasantness well enough, he doth not experience it. The Pleasures of God's House lye not in the outer Courts, but within the Vail. None know what the Peace of God means, but those that are under the Dominion and Operation of his Grace; nor can any that deny the Power of Godliness, expect to share in the Pleasures of it. When Wisdom enters into wine Hoars, takes Possession of that, and becomes a living active Principle there, then, and not till then, it is pleasant unto thy Soul. They that aim at no more but the Credit of their Religion before Men, justly fall short of the Comfort of it in themselves.

Hypocrites have other Things that they

they delight in, the Satisfaction of the World, the Gratifications of Sense, which put their Mouths out of Taste to spiritual Pleasures, so that they have no Pleasure in them. They that have their Hearts upon their Marketings, are weary of the *New Moons* and the *Sabbaths*. With good Reason, therefore, doth *Job* ask, *Will the Hypocrite delight himself in the Almighty?* No, his Soul takes its Ease in the Creature, and returns not to the Creator as its Rest, and Home.

Amos 8. 5.

John 27. 104.

Some *Flashy* Pleasure an Hypocrite may have in Religion, from a Land-Flood of sensible Affections, who yet has not the least Taste of the *River of God's Pleasures*. There were those who delighted to know *God's Ways*, they met with some pretty Notions in them, that surpriz'd them, and pleas'd their Fancies, but they did not delight to walk in them. The stony Ground receiv'd the Word with Joy, and yet receiv'd no lasting Benefit by it. *Herod* heard *John* gladly, he found something very agreeable in his Sermons, and which Natural Conscience could not but embrace, and yet could not bear to be reprov'd for his *Herodias*. A florid Preacher, such as *Ezekiel* was, may be to them as a very lovely Song of one that can play well on an Instrument; and yet at the same time, the Word of the Lord, if it touch their Consciences, and shew them their Transgressions, is to them a Reproach.

Psalm 36. 8.

- 46. 4.

Isa. 58. 2.

Luke 8. 13.

Mark 6. 20.

Ezek. 33. 32.

Jer. 6. 10.

They whose Hearts are not right with God in their Religion, cannot have the Pleasure of Communion with God; for it is the Soul only that converseth with God, and that he communicates himself to; Bodily Exercise profiteth little, and, therefore, pleaseth little. The Service of God is a Burthen, and a Task to an unsanctify'd, unrenewed Heart, 'tis out of its Element when it is brought into that Air; and, therefore, instead of snuffing it up, and saying, Behold what a Pleasure it is? it snuffs at it, and saith, Behold what a Weariness it is?

Nor can they take any Pleasure in Communing with their own Consciences, or in their Reflections, for they are ready upon all Occasions, to give them Uneasiness, by Charging them with that which is disagreeable to their Profession, and gives the Lye to it: And tho' they cry Peace, Peace to themselves, they have that within them, that tells them the God of Heaven doth not speak Peace to them; And this casts a Damp upon all their Pleasure, that their Religion itself gives them Pain, God himself is a Terror to them, and the Gospel itself condemns them for their Insincerity. And in Time of Trouble and Distress none are so much afraid, as the Sinners in Zion, the secret Sinners there; and Fearfulness is the greatest Surprise of all to the Hypocrites, that were at Ease in Zion, and thought its strong Holds would be their Security.

And, therefore it is, that Hypocrites

cast

cast off Religion, and discharge themselves of the Profession of it, after they have a While disguis'd themselves with it, because it did not sit easy; and they are weary of it; Tradesmen that take no Pleasure in their Business, will not stick to it long, no more will those that take no Pleasure in their Religion; nor will any thing carry us through the outward Difficulties of it, but the inward Delights of it; if those be wanting, the Tree is not water'd, and therefore, even its Leaf will soon wither. The Hypocrite will not always call upon God, will not long do it, because he will not delight himself in the Almighty; And this ought not to be a Stumbling-Block to us. Thus Hypocrites in Religion prove Apostates from it; and the Reason is, because they never found it pleasant; they never found it pleasant, because they were never sincere in it, which was their Fault, and not the Fault of the Religion they profess'd.

Psa. 1. 3.

Job 27. 9.

10.

Let us, therefore, take heed, and beware of Hypocrisy, as ever we hope to find Pleasure in Religion. Counterfeit Piety hath some other End in View, some other End to serve, than that which is the Spring of true Delight; They who rest in that, bew them out Cisterns, that can hold but little Water, and that dead, nay, broken Cisterns that can hold no Water; and how can they expect the Pleasure which they have, that cleave to, and continually draw from the Fountain of Life and Living Waters;

Luke 12. 12.

Jer. 2. 13.

No, as their *Principles* are, such are their *Pleasures*; as their *Aims* are, such are their *Joys*; they appeal to the World, and to the World they shall go; but let not the Credit of Religion suffer then, for the sake of those who are only Pretenders to it; and so, indeed, Enemies to it.

2. It is possible, that *true Christians* may through their own Fault and Folly want very much of the *Pleasure of Religion*; and therefore, I say, True Piety as far as it goes is very pleasant; as far as it has its due Influence upon us, and is rightly understood, and liv'd up to,

We abide by it, That *Wisdom's Ways* are always pleasant, and yet must own, that *Wisdom's Children* are sometimes unpleasant, and therein come short of

Luke 7. 35. *Justifying* Wisdom in this Matter as they ought to do, and rather give Advantage to her Accusers, and Prejudice to her Cause. Either they *miss* these Ways, and turn aside out of them, and so lose the Pleasure that is to be found in them: Or (which is a common Case)

Psal 2, 77. they *refuse* to take the Comfort, which they might have in these Ways. They hamper themselves with needless Perplexities, make the Yoke heavy which Christ has made easy, and that frightful which he design'd should be encouraging; they *indulge* themselves, and then as *Jonah* when he was angry, *justify* themselves in causeless Griets and Fears, and think they do well to put themselves into

Mark 14. 33 an Agony, to be very heavy and sore amaz'd,
and

and their Souls exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death; whereas Christ put himself into such an Agony to make us easy.

But let not true Piety suffer in its Reputation because of this; for tho' it be call'd a *Religious Melancholy*, it is not so, for it is contrary to the very Nature and Design of Religion, while it shelters itself under the Colour of it, and pretends to take rise from it. It is rather to be call'd a *superstitious Melancholy*, *σεσιδαι* arising from such a *superstitious* Fear of God, *φοβία* as the Heathen were driven by to their *Demons* and barbarous Sacrifices, which is a great Injury to the Honour of his Goodness, as well as a great Injury to themselves.

If the Professors of Religion look for that in the *World*, which is to be had in God only, and that is *Perfect Happiness*; Or, if they look for that in themselves which is to be had in Christ only, and that is a *Perfect Righteousness*: Or, if they look for that on Earth which is to be had in Heaven only, and that is *perfect Holiness*, and then fret, and grieve, and go mourning from Day to Day, because they are disappointed in their Expectations, they may thank themselves, Luke 24. 5. *Why seek they the Living among the Dead?* 17.

Let but Religion, true and pure Religion in all the Laws and Instances of it command and prevail, and these Tears will soon be wiped away; Let but God's Servants take their Work before them, allow each Principle of their Religion its due Weight, and each Practice of it its due

Phil. 3. 3.

Mat. 5. 4.

due Place, and Proportion, and let them not dash one Precept of the Gospel, any more than one Table of the Law in Pieces, against another; Let them look upon it to be as much their Duty to *rejoyce in Christ Jesus*, as to *mourn for Sin*; nay, and more, for *this* is in Order to *that*, and then we shall not fear, that their Sorrows will in the least shake the Truth of our Doctrine, for as far as the Religion is carry'd, it will carry this Character along with it, and further it cannot be expected.

Secondly, In true Piety, I say, there is a Pleasure; there is that which we may find Comfort in, and fetch Satisfaction from. There's a *Bonum jucundum* as well as *utile*. That's pleasant which is *agreeable*, which the Soul *rejoyceth* in, or, at least *reposeth* in; or which it *relishest*, pleaseth itself with, and desireth the Continuance and Repetition of. Let a Man's Faculties be in their due Frame and Temper, not vitiated, corrupted, or deprav'd, and there is that in the Exercise of Religion, which highly *suits* them, and *satisfies* them. And this Pleasure is such as is not *allay'd* with any thing to cast a Damp upon it.

1. The Ways of Religion are *right*, and *pleasant*; They are pleasant without the Allay of Injury and Iniquity; Sin pretends to have its Pleasures, but they
 Job 33. 27. are the *Perverting of that which is right*;
 Prov. 9. 17. They are *stolen Waters*, unjust, tho' pleasant; but the Pleasures of Godliness

ness are as agreeable to the *Reclitute* of our Nature, as they are gratifying to the pure and undebauched Desires of it. It is the Way in which we *should* go; and the Way, in which, if we were not wretchedly degenerated, we *would* go of Choice.

They are *right*, for they are *mark'd* out to us by our *Rightful Lord*, who having given us the Being of Rational Creatures, has Authority to give us a Law suited to our Being, and he has done it both by Natural Conscience, and by the written Word, he hath said, *This is the Way walk in it*; 'tis not only permitted and allow'd us, but charg'd Ifa. 30. 21. and commanded us to walk in it; hath sent us as Messengers from him to travel this Road upon his Errand.

They are *Right*, for they lead directly to our *Great End*, have a tendency to our Welfare, here and for ever; They are the only right Way to that which is the Felicity of our Being, which we shall certainly miss and come short of, if we do not walk in this way.

But that's not all, they are also *pleasant*; Behold, *how good and how pleasant* it is the Happiness of those that fear God, that he not only *teacheth them in the Way that he shall chuse*, (and we may be sure that's the right Way,) but also that *their Souls shall dwell at ease*; And justly may they dwell at ease, who have infinite Wisdom itself to chuse their Way, and guide them in it. That may be right which is not *pleasant*, and that *plea-*

pleasant, which is not right; but Religion is both. Therefore in the next verse it is compar'd to the *Tree of Life*; The *Tree of Knowledge* was indeed pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desir'd, but it was forbidden, and therefore Religion is call'd, A *Tree of Life*, which was not only pleasant, but was allow'd till Sin enter'd.

2. They are easy and pleasant; Pleasant without the Allay of Toil and Difficulty, any more than ariseth from the Corruption of our own Nature; That indeed, makes such Opposition, that we have need of Arguments, and blessed be God, we have good Arguments to prove the Practise of Religion easy; But it is more than so, it is pleasant.

• Much less is said than is intended, when we are told that his Commandments are not grievous. They are not only not grievous and galling, but they are gracious and pleasing. His Yoke is easy; The word there us'd, signifies more than so, 'tis sweet and gentle; Not only Easy as a Yoke is to the Neck, when 'tis so well fitted as not to hurt it, but easy as a Pillow is to the Head when 'tis weary and sleepy. 'Tis not only tolerable, but very comfortable. There is not only no matter of complaint in the ways of God, nothing to hurt us, but there is abundant matter of Joy and Rejoycing; It is not only Work which is not Weariness, but Work which is its own Wages; Such a *Tree of Life*, as will not only screen us from

from the Storm and Tempest, and feed us with necessary Food, but we may sit down under the Shadow of it with great Delight, and the Fruit of it will be sweet unto our Taste. *Capl. 2. 3.*

3. They are *gainful and pleasant*, and have not the Allay of *Expence and Loss*: That may be *profitable*, which yet may be *unpleasant*, and that *pleasant*, which afterwards may prove very *unprofitable* and *prejudicial*; what Fruit have Sinners from those things in which yet they said they had *Pleasure*. But Religion brings both *Pleasure* with it, and *Profit* after it; The Pleasures of Religion do not cost us dear; there's no Loss by them when the Account comes to be balance'd. *Rom. 6. 21.*

The *Gain* of this World is usually fetch'd in by *Toll and uneasy Labour*, which is grievous to *Flesh and Blood*; The *Servants* of this World are *Drudges* to it; They *rise up early, sit up late, eat the Bread of Sorrows* in pursuit of its *Wealth*. They *labour and bereave their Souls of good*; but the *Servants of God* have a *Pleasure*, even in the work they are to get by, and which they shall be recompenc'd for. *Psa. 117. 21.*
Eccles. 4. 2.

Besides the Tendency that there is in the Practice of serious Godliness to our Happiness in the other Life, there is much in it that conduceth to our Comfort in this Life. *David* observes it to the Honour of Religion, that not only *after-keeping*, but in keeping God's *Commandments, there is a great Reward*; *Psa. 19. 10.*

a present great Reward of Obedience
 Prov. 14. 14. in Obedience. A good Man is satisfied
 in himself, that is, in that which Di-
 vine Grace hath wrought in him. And
 Psa. 138. 7. the Saints are said to sing in the ways of
 the Lord, as those that find them plea-
 sant Ways.

And the closer we adhere to the Rules
 of Religion, and the more intimate
 our Converse is with Divine Things,
 the more we live with an Eye to Christ,
 and another World, the more Comfort
 we are likely to have in our own Bo-
 soms. Psalm 119. Great Peace have they that love
 God's Laws, and the more they love it,
 the greater their Peace is; nay, 'tis
 promis'd to the Church that all her
 Children shall be taught of the Lord (and
 those whom he teacheth are well taught,
 and taught to do well) and then Great
 Isa. 54. 13. shall be the Peace of her Children; It shall
 be entail'd upon them; Peace like a
 River, in omne volubilis axum.

Thirdly, I call it a true Pleasure. As
 1 Tim. 6. 20. there is Science, falsely so call'd, so there
 is Pleasure falsely so call'd: One of the
 Damascen. Ancients distinguisheth between 'Hedō-
 'Orthod. Fid. vāc hantēr and 'Hōvās Pōdēs; Plea-
 1. 2. sures that have some Truth in them,
 and Pleasures that deceive us with a Lye
 in their Right-hand. Some have said
 that the School of Epicurus, which is
 commonly branded and condemn'd for
 making Pleasure Man's chief Good, did
 not mean sensual Pleasure; but the
 Pleasure of the Mind: And we should
 be willing enough to admit it, but that
 the

the other Principles of his Philosophy were so atheistical and irreligious; but this we are sure of, that it is a *true Pleasure* which Religion secures to us; A Pleasure that *deserves* the Name, and *answers* it to the full.

It is a *true Pleasure*, for,

1. It is *real*, and *not counterfeit*. Carnal Wordlings pretend a great Satisfaction in the Enjoyments of the World, and the Gratifications of Sense, Soul, *take thine Ease*, saith one; *I have found me out Substance*, saith another; even *the Life of my Hand*; saith a third, *I have seen the Fire*, *The Wicked boasts of his Hearts Desire*; but Solomon assures us, not only that *the End of that Mirth is Heaviness*, but that even in Laughter *the Heart is sorrowful*; Both those that make a God of their *Belly*, and those that make a God of their *Money*, find such a constant Pain and Uneasiness, attending their spiritual Idolatries, that their Pleasure is but from the Teeth outward. Discontent at present Disappointments, and Fear of worse, ungovern'd *Passions* (which seldom are made less *turbulent* by the Gratifications of the Appetite) and above all, Conscience of Guilt, and Dread of Divine Wrath, these give them the *Lye*, when they boast of their Pleasures, which with such Allays are not to be boasted of; They would not be thought to be disappointed in that, which they have chosen for their Happiness, and therefore, they seem to be *pleas'd*, they seem to

Luke 12. 20.

Hos 12. 8.

Isa. 57. 10.

Prov. 14. 13.

be pleasant, when really their Heart, if it knows its own Wickedness, cannot
 Prov. 14. 10. but know its own Bitterness.

And many of the good Things of this World, of which we said, *These same*
 Gen. 5. 29. shall comfort us, prove Vexations to us; and we are disappointed in that, where in we most promis'd our selves Satisfaction; if we say our Bed shall comfort us, perhaps it is not a Bed to rest on, but a Bed to rots on, as it was to poor Job, when wearisome Nights were appointed to him. Nay, such Strangers are we to real Pleasure in the Things of this Life, and so oft do we deceive ourselves with that which is counterfeit, that we wish to live to those Days of Life, which we are told will be evil Days, and those Years, of which we are assur'd that we shall say, *We have no Pleasure in them.*

But the Pleasures of Religion are solid, substantial Pleasures, and not painted; Gold, and not gilded over;
 Prov. 8. 21. These Sons of Pleasure inherit Substance; 'Tis that which is; the Foundation firm, Job 15. 11. the Superstructure strong, the Consolations of God not few, nor small, while a vain and foolish World cause their Eyes
 Prov. 23. 5. to fly upon that which is not. Worldly People pretend to the Joy they have not; but Godly People conceal the Joy they have; as he did that had found the Treasure hid in the Field. They have, like their Master, Meat to eat, which the World knows not of.

2. It is rational, and not burish. 'Tis the

the Pleasure of the *Soul*, not of *Sense*;
 'Tis the *peculiar* Pleasure of a *Man*, not
 that which we have in Common with
 the inferior Creatures. The Pleasures
 of Religion are not those of the meer
Animal Life, which arise from the Gra-
 tifications of the Senses of the Body,
 and its Appetites; No, they affect the
Soul, that Part of us by which we are
 ally'd to the World of Spirits, that
 Noble Part of us, and therefore, are to
 be call'd the *true* Pleasures of a *Man*.

The Brute Creatures have the same
 Pleasures of Sense that we have; and
 perhaps in some of them the Senses are
 more *exquisite*, and consequently they
 have them in a much higher Degree,
 nor are their Pleasures liable to the
 Correctives of Reason and Conscience
 as ours are. Who live such merry Lives
 as the *Leviathan*, who plays in the Deep? *Psal.* 104.
 or the Birds, that sing among the Branches? *12, 26.*

But what are these to a Man, who
 being taught more than the Beasts of the *Job* 35. 10.
Earth, and made wiser than the Fowls of
Heaven, and being dignify'd above the
 Beasts, not so much by the Powers of
Reason, as by a Capacity for Religion,
 is certainly design'd for Enjoyments of
 a more excellent Nature, for Spiritual
 and Heavenly Delights. When God
 made Man, he left him not to the En-
 joyments of the wide World, with the
 other Creatures, but inclos'd him a Pa-
 radise, a Garden of Pleasure (so Eden
 signifies) where he shou'd have De-
 lights proper for him; signify'd indeed,

by the Pleasures of a Garden, pleasant Trees and their Fruits, but *really* the Delights of a Soul, that was a Ray of Divine Light, and a Spark of Divine Fire, newly breath'd into him from above, and on which God's Image and Likeness was imprinted. And we never recover our Felicity, which we lost by our first Parents indulging the Appetite of the Body, 'till we come to the *due Relish* of those Pleasures, which Man has in common with Angels, and a *due Contempt* of those, which he has in common with the Brutes.

The Pleasures of Wisdom's Ways may at second hand *affect the Body*, and be an Advantage to that; Hence it is said to be *Health to the Navel*, and *Marrow to the Bones*, but its Residence is in the *hidden Man of the Heart*; and its Comforts delight the Soul in the *Multitudes of its Thoughts*; 'Tis pleasant to the Soul, and makes that like a *water'd Garden*. These are Pleasures, which a Man by the Assistance of Divine Grace may *reason himself into*, and not (as it is with sensual Pleasures) *reason himself out of*.

There is no Pleasure separate from that of Religion, which pretends to be an intellectual Pleasure, but that of *Learning*, and that of *Honour*; But as to the Pleasure of a *Proud Man* in his Dignities, and the Respects paid him, as *Herod*, in the Acclamations of the Crowd, it doth but affect the Fancy. It is *Vain Glory*; it is not *Glory*; 'Tis but

but the Folly of him that receives the Honour, sed by the Folly of them that give it; so that it doth not deserve to be call'd a *Rational Pleasure*; 'tis a *Lust of the Mind* that's gratify'd by it, that is as much an Instance of our Degeneracy, as any of the *Lusts of the Flesh* are.

And as to the Pleasure of a Scholar, abstracted from Religion, it is, indeed, *rational and intellectual*; but it is only the Pleasure of the Mind in *knowing Truth*, and not its *enjoying Good*. Solomon, that had as much of this Pleasure as ever any Man had, and as nice a Taste of it, yet hath assur'd us from his own Experience, that in *much Wisdom* of this kind is *much Grief*, and *he that increaseth Knowledge increaseth Sorrow*. Eccl. 1. 18.

But the Pleasures which a Holy Soul hath in *Knowing God*, and in *Communion with him*, are not only of a *spiritual Nature*, but they are *satisfying*, they are *filling* to the Soul, and make a Happiness adequate to its best Affections.

3. It is *remaining*, and not *flashy* and *transitory*: That's *true Pleasure* and deserves the Name, which will *continue* with us as a *Tree of Life*, and not wither as the *green Herb*; which will be not as the *Light of a Candle*, which is soon burnt out, but as that of the *Sun*, which is a *faithful Witness in Heaven*. We reckon that most *valuable*, which is most *durable*.

The Pleasures of Sense are fading and perishing, as *the World passeth away*.

1 John 2. 17.

- so do the Lusts of it; That which at first pleases and satisfies, after a While palls and surfeits. *As the Crackling of*
 Eccles. 7. 6. *Thorns under a Pot, which make a great Blaze, and a great Noise for a little While, but soon end in Soot and Ashes, such is the Laughter of the Fool; the End of his Mirth is Heaviness. Balshazzar's Jollity is soon turn'd into the utmost*
 Isa. 21. 4. *Consternation; The Night of my Pleasure hath be turn'd into Fear to me. The Pleasures of Sin are said to be but for a Season, for the End of that Mirth is Heaviness! As they have no Confidence, so they have no Continuance.*

- But the Pleasures of Religion will abide; they wither not in Winter, nor tarnish with Time, nor doth Age wrinkle their Beauty; Frosts nip them not, nor do Storms blast them; they continue through the greatest Opposition of Events, and despise that Time and
 Eccles. 9. 11. *Chance, which happens to all Things under the Sun. Believers when they are sorrowful they are but as sorrowful, for they are always rejoicing: Thanks be to*
 2 Cor. 6. 10, — 2. 14 *God, who always consents us to triumph. If an Immortal Soul make an Eternal God its chief Joy, what should hinder*
 1 Thel. 5. 16. *but that it should rejoice evermore: for as the Treasure, so the Pleasure is laid up there, where neither Moth nor Rust can corrupt, nor Thieves break through, and steal. Christ's Joy which he gives to those that are his, is Joy which no*
 John 16. 22. *Man takes from them, for 'tis their Heart that rejoiceth. They are the Beginning*
 of

of Everlasting Pleasures, the Earnest and Foretaste of them, so that they are in Effect, *Pleasures for evermore.*

So then, The great Truth which I desire my Heart, and yours may be fully convinc'd of is this; That *A Holy, Heavenly Life spent in the Service of God, and in Communion with him, is without doubt, the most pleasant and comfortable Life any Man can live in this World.*

CHAP. II.

The Pleasure of being Religious, prov'd from the Nature of True Religion; and many particular Instances of it.

THE Doctrine needs no further Explication, nor can have any better than our own Experience of it; but the chief Part of this Undertaking is to prove the Truth of it: And O! that God, by me, would set it before you in a true Light, so as that you may all be convinc'd of it, and embrace it as a *Faithful Saying*, and *well worthy of all Acceptation*, That a *Godly Life is a pleasant Life*: so as that we may be wrought upon to live such a Life.

Pleasure is a tempting Thing; what yields Delight cannot but attract Desire; 'Tis next to Necessary, to strongly do it urge. Surely, if we were but fully

fully perswaded of this, that Religion has Pleasure on its Side, we would be wrought upon by the Allurement of that to be Religious. 'Tis certainly so, let us not be in doubt of it. Here's a Bait that has no Hook under it, a Pleasure courting you which has no Pain attending it, no Bitterness at the latter End of it; a Pleasure which God himself invites you to, and which will make you happy, truly and eternally happy, and shall not this work upon you?

But we may entertain ourselves, and our Hearers, long enough with Discourses of the Pleasantness of Wisdom's Ways, but they will not profit unless they be mixed with Faith. O that we would all mix Faith with this Truth: that we would yield to the Evidence of it.

To make way for the Proof of it, I would only desire two Things.

1. That you would lay aside Prejudice, and give a fair and impartial Hearing to this Cause, and do not prejudge it.

Prov. 8. 13,

14.

He that answers any Matter, before he hear it, hear it out, it is Folly and Shame to him; especially if it be a Matter of great Importance and Concern to himself; a Matter of Life and Death. Be willing, therefore, to believe, that it is possible there may, and then I doubt not but to make out, that 'tis certain there is, true Pleasure in true Religion.

You have got a Notion it may be, and are confirm'd in it by the common

Cry

Cry of the Multitude, That Religion is a *sour, melancholy Thing*, that 'tis to bid Farewell to all Pleasure and Delight, and to spend your Days in Grief, and your Years in Sighing; and if we offer any thing to the contrary, That it is a pleasant Thing, and the best Entertainment that can be to the Mind, you are ready to say as *Ezekiel's* Hearers did of him, *Doth he not speak Parables?* *Ezek. 20. 49.* Doth he not speak Paradoxes? You startle at it, and start from it as a hard Saying, like *Nathaniel* when he said, *Can any good Thing come out of Nazareth?* *John 1. 46.* So you are ready to say, Can there be any Pleasure in Religion? Believe it, Sirs, There *can be*, there *cannot but be* Pleasure in it.

Do not measure Religion by the Pollies of some that profess it, but do not live up to their Profession, nor allow it; Let them bear their own Burthen, or clear themselves as they can, but you are to judge of Things, not Persons, and therefore, ought not to be prejudic'd against Religion for their sakes. Nor should you measure by the *Ill Opinions* which its Adversaries have of it, or the *Ill Name* which they endeavour to put it into, who neither know it, nor love it, and therefore, care not what unjust Things they say to justify themselves in the Contempt of it, and to hinder others from Embracing it; but *think freely* of this Matter.

2. That you would admit this as a Principle, and abide by it, That the
Soul

Soul is the Man: This is the *Postulatum* I lay down, in Order to the Proof of the Doctrine, and I hope it will be readily granted me, That Man is principally to be consider'd as an intellectual, immortal Being, endu'd with spiritual Powers and Capacities, ally'd to the World of Spirits, and accountable to the Father of Spirits; That there is a *Spirit in Man*, that has Sensations and Dispositions of its own, Active and Receptive Faculties distinct from those of the Body; And that this is the Part of us, which we are, and ought to be most concern'd about; because it is really, well, or ill *with us*, according as it is, well or ill *with our Souls*.

Believe, That in Man's present State, the Soul and the Body have separate and contrasting Interests; The Body *thinks* 'tis its Interest to have its Appetites gratify'd, and to be indulg'd in its Pleasures, while the Soul *knows* 'tis its Interest to have the Appetites of the Body subdu'd and mortify'd, that *Spiritual Pleasures* may be the better relish'd; and we are here upon our Trial, which of these two we will side with.

Ha. 46. 8.

Be wise, therefore, be resolute, and *show yourselves Men* that are acted and govern'd by Reason, and are affected with Things as Reason represents them to you; not Reason, as it is in the meer *natural Man*, clouded and plung'd, and lost in Sense; but Reason elevated and guided by Divine Revelation to us, and

Di-

Divine Grace in us. *Walk by Faith*, and not by *Sense*; Let the God that made you, and knows you, and wisheth you well, and from whom your Judgment must proceed, determine your Sentiments in this Matter, and the Work is done.

Now I shall, in the first Place, endeavour the Proof of this Doctrine, by shewing you *what Religion is*, wherein it *consists*, and what those Things are which constitute serious Godliness, and then you shall yourselves judge, whether it be not in its own Nature *pleasant*. If you understand Religion aright, you will find, that it has an *innate Sweetness* in it, inseparable from it. Let it but *speak for itself*, and it will *recommend itself*. The very shewing of this Beauty in its own Features and Proportions, is enough to bring us all in Love with it.

You shall see the Pleasure of Religion in twelve Instances of it.

First, To be Religious is to know the *only true God*, and *Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*: And is not that pleasant? This is the first Thing we have to do, to get our Understandings rightly *informed*, concerning both the *Object*, and the *Medium* of our Religious Regards, to seek, and to receive this Light from Heaven, to have it diffus'd through our Souls as the Morning Light in the Air, and to be *turn'd* to the Impressions of it, as the Clay to the Seal; and this is a Pleasure to the Soul that understands itself, and

and its own true Interest. Truly the
 Eccles. 11. 8. *Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is*
 Prov. 15. 30. *for the Eyes to behold the Sun; it rejoiceth*
the Heart; Hence Light is often put for
Joy and Comfort; but no Light is
 2 Cor. 4. 6. *comparable to that of the Knowledge of*
the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus
Christ.

This is Finding the Knowledge we
 had lost, and must for ever have de-
 spair'd of Finding, if God had not made
 it known to us by his Spirit: 'Tis Find-
 ing the Knowledge we are undone with-
 out, and Happy, for ever Happy in, y
 for what is Heaven but this Knowledge
 in Perfection? 'Tis finding the Know-
 ledge which the Soul would covet and
 rest in, if it had but recover'd itself
 from the Delirium, which by the Fall
 it is thrown into. They that sate in
 Mat. 4. 16. *Darkness* when they begin to be Religi-
 ous, begin to see a great Light, and it is
 a pleasing surprize to them; 'tis coming
 into a new World; such a Pleasure as
 none could know so well, as he that
 had his Sight given him, tho' he was
 born Blind. Blessed are your Eyes, (saith
 Mat. 13. 16. Christ to those whom he had brought
 into an Acquaintance with himself,)
 Prov. 22. 17. *for they see. Apply thy Heart to my Know-*
 18. *ledge, saith Solomon, for it is a pleasant*
thing if thou keep it within thee. Thou
 Prov. 24. 13. *wilt eat Honey, because it is good, and the*
 14. *Honey-comb which is sweet to the Taste; so*
shall the Knowledge of Wisdom be to thy
Soul. Could a Learned Man, that
had hit upon a Demonstration in Mo-
thematicks,

them *at* *icks* *cry* *out* *in* *a* *Transport* *of* *Joy*,
I *have* *found*, *I* *have* *found*; and may not ^{εὐφρα}
 they much more boast of the Discovery, ^{εὐφρα}
 that have found the Knowledge of the
 most High?

There is no Pleasure in any Learning
 like that of Learning Christ; and the
 Things that belong to our Everlasting
 Peace; for that which is known is not
 small and trivial, is not doubtful and
 uncertain, is not foreign to us, and
 which we are not concern'd in; which
 are Things that may much diminish
 the Pleasure of any Knowledge; But
 it is great and sure, and of the last Im-
 portance to us, and the Knowledge of
 it gives us Satisfaction; Here we may
 rest our Souls. To know the Perfec-
 tions of the Divine Nature, the Un-
 searchable Riches of Divine Grace, to
 be led into the Mystery of our Redemp-
 tion and Reconciliation by Christ; this
 is Food, such Knowledge as this is a
 Feast to the Soul; 'Tis *Meat* indeed,
 and *Drink* indeed; 'Tis the Knowledge
 of that which the Angels desire to look in-
 to. If the Knowledge of the Law of
 God was so sweet to David, sweeter than
 Honey to his Taste, how much more should
 the Knowledge of the Gospel of Christ
 be so to us; when God gives this Wis-
 dom and Knowledge, with it he gives Joy
 to him that is good in his Sight.

Eph. 3. 8.

1 Cor. 2. 7.

1 Pet. 1. 12.

Psal. 19. 10.

—119. 103.

Eccl. 3. 26.

I wonder what Pleasure or Satisfac-
 tion those can have in themselves,
 that are ignorant of God, and Christ,
 and another World, tho' they are told

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there

there is such a Knowledge to be had, and there are those that have it, and it is their continual Entertainment. But thus do Men stand in their own Light, when they love *Darkness* rather than *Light*.

Secondly, To be Religious is to return to God, and repose in Him as the Rest of our Souls: And is not that pleasant? It is not only for our Understandings to embrace the Knowledge of him, but our Affections to fasten upon the Enjoyment of him: It is to love God as our Chief Good, and to rest in that Love; to love him with all our Heart, and Soul, and Mind, and Might, who is well worthy of all that Love, and infinitely more; Amiable in himself, Gracious to us, who will accept our Love, and return it; who hath promis'd to love those that love him, The Love of God reigning in the Soul (and that's true Religion) is as much a Satisfaction to the Soul, as the Love of the World is a Vexation to it, when it comes to be reflected upon, and is found to be so ill bestow'd.

How pleasant must it needs be so far to recover ourselves, as to quit the World for a Portion and Happiness as utterly insufficient to be so, and to depend upon him to be so, who has enough in him to answer our utmost Expectations; when we have in vain sought for Satisfaction where it is not to be had, to seek it and find it where it is; to come from doting upon Lying Vanities, and Spending our Money for that

which

Prov. 8:17.

Isaiah 55:2.

which is not Bread, to live, and live plentifully upon a God that is enough, a God All-sufficient, and in him to enjoy our own Mercies. Did ever any thing speak a Mind more easy, and better pleas'd than that of David, Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, to God as thy Rest, for in him I am where I would be, I have what I would have; Or that, O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord, the Portion of my Inheritance, and of my Cup: And then, The Lines are fallen to me in pleasant Places, and I have a goodly Heritage. Or that, Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire in Comparison of Thee; for when Flesh and Heart fail, Thou art the Strength and Joy of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.

We place not Religion in Raptures and Transports, but without doubt, Holy Souls that are at Home in God, that have made the Most High their Habitation, whose Desires are towards him, whose Delights are in him, who are in him as their Centre and Element, dwell at Ease. None can imagine the Pleasure, that a Believer has in his Covenant Relation to God, and Interest in him, and the Assurance of his Love: Have I taken thy Testimonies to be my Heritage for ever? surely they are the Rejoycing of my Heart; I cannot be better provided for. When King Asa brought his People to renew their Covenant with God, it is said, They swear unto

2 Chr. 15. the Lord with a loud Voice, and with Shouting,
 14, 15. and with Trumpets. And all Judah
 rejoiced at the Oath; for they had sworn
 with all their Heart.

When we come
 to make it our own Act and Deed, to
 join ourselves to the Lord in an Ever-
 lasting Covenant, and are upright with
 him in it, we cannot but be pleas'd
 with what we have done, 'tis a Marriage-
 Cant. 2, 16. Covenant, 'tis made with Joy; My Be-
 loved is mine, and I am his.

Thirdly, To be Religious is to come to
 God as a Father, in and by Jesus Christ as
 Mediator: And is not this pleasant? We
 have not only the Pleasure of Knowing
 and Loving God, but the Pleasure of
 Drawing nigh to him, and having by
 Faith a humble Freedom and Intimacy
 with him, Blessed are they that dwell in
 his Courts, they shall be satisfy'd with the
 Goodness of his House, even of his Holy
 Temple. Religion is describ'd by Coming
 to God, and what can be more agree-
 able to a Soul that comes from him.

'Tis to come to God as a Child to his
 Father, to his Father's House, to his
 Father's Arms, and to cry Abba, Fa-
 ther. To come as a Petitioner to his
 Prince, is a Privilege; but to come as
 a Child to his Father is a Pleasure; And
 this Pleasure have all the Saints, that
 have receiv'd the Spirit of Adoption.
 They can look up to the God that made
 them, as one that loves them, and has a
 tender Compassion for them, as a Father
 has for his Children, and delights to do
 them good, taking Pleasure in their Pros-
 perity;

Isa. 103. 13

perity; as one whom tho' they have offended yet is reconcil'd to them, owns them as his Children, and encourageth them to call him Father. When he afflicts them they know 'tis in Love, and for their Benefit, and that still it is *their Father's good Pleasure to give them the Kingdom.* When Ephraim bemoan'd himself as a Bullork unaccustomed to the Yoke, God bemoan'd him as a dear Son, as a pleasant Child; And if even Prodigals when Penitents become pleasant Children to God, surely they have no Reason to be unpleasant to themselves.

But this is not all, 'Tis not only to come to God as a Father, who himself loves us; but it is to come to him in the Name of Jesus Christ, who is our Advocate with the Father; that by these two immutable Things we might have strong Consolation, that we have not only a God to go to, but an Advocate to introduce us to him, and to speak for us. Believing in Christ is sometimes express'd by *Rejoycing in him*; for it is a Complacency of Soul in the Methods, which Infinite Wisdom has taken, of bringing God and Man together by a Mediator. *We are the Circumcision that rejoyce in Christ Jesus*; not only rely upon him, but triumph in him. Paul is not only not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but he glories in it; And when the Eunuch is brought to believe in Christ with all his Heart, he goes on his Way rejoycing, highly pleas'd with what he has done.

E 3

What

- What a Pleasure, what a Satisfaction is it, to lodge the great Concerns of our Souls and Eternity (which, surely, we cannot but have some careful Thoughts about) in such a Skillful, Faithful Hand, as that of our Lord Jesus, and this we do by Faith; to cast the Burthen upon him, who is able to save to the uttermost, and as willing as he is able, and thus to make ourselves easy. How is blessed Paul elevated at the Thought of this,
- Rom. 8. 34. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that dy'd, yea, rather is risen again; And with what Pleasure doth he reflect upon the Confidence he had put in Jesus Christ,*
- 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that Day.* They that know what it is to be in Pain for Sin, and in Love to obtain the Favour of God, cannot but know, what a Pleasure it is to believe in Christ as the Propitiation for our Sins, and our Intercessor with God.
- Gal. 2. 20. *How can we live a more pleasant Life, than to live by the Faith of the Son of God, to be continually depending on him, and deriving from him, and referring all to him; and as we have received him, so to walk in him. 'Tis in Believing, that we are fill'd with Joy and Peace.*
- Rom. 15. 13. *Fourthly, To be Religious is to enjoy God in all our Creature-Comforts: And is not that pleasant? It is to take the common Supports and Conveniences of Life, be they of the richest, or be they of the meanest, as the Products of his Providential Care concerning us, and the*

the Gifts of his Bounty to us, and in them to Taste, and see that the Lord is good, good to all, good to us: It is to look above second Causes to the first, through the Creature to the Creator, and to say concerning every thing that is agreeable, and serviceable to us, This I ask'd, and this I have, from the Hand of my Heavenly Father. What a noble Taste and Relish doth this put into all the Blessings, with which we are daily loaded, our Health and Ease, our Rest and Sleep, our Food and Raiment, all the Satisfaction we have in our Relations, Peace in our Dwellings, Success in our Callings, the Sweetness of these is more than doubled, 'tis highly rais'd, when by our Religion we are taught and enabled, to see them all coming to us from the Goodness of God, as our Great Benefactor, and thus to enjoy them richly, while those who look no further than the Creature, enjoy them very poorly, and but as the inferior Creatures do. 1 Tim. 6. 17.

Carnal, Irreligious People, tho' they take a greater Liberty in the Use of the Delights of Sense, than good People dare take, and therein think they have the Advantage of them, yet I am confident, they have not half the true Delight in them, that good People have, not only because all Excesses are a Force upon Nature, and Sensations are as painful as Hunger and Thirst, but because tho' they do not thus abuse God's good Creatures, yet they deprive themselves of

of the Comfort of receiving them from their Father's Hand, because they are not affected to him as obedient Children.

Hosea 2. 8. *They knew not that I gave them Corn, and Wine, and Oil. They make Use of the*

Isa. 22. 11. *Creature, but They have not looked unto the Maker thereof, nor had Respect to him that fashion'd it long ago, as good People do, and so they come short of the Pleasure which good People have.*

Is it not pleasant to taste Covenant-Love in Common Mercies? Very pleasant to see the Hand of our Heavenly Father spreading our Table, filling our Cup, making our Houses safe, and our Beds easy? This they do, that by Faith have their Eyes ever towards the Lord, that by Prayer fetch in his Blessing upon all their Enjoyments, and by Praise give the Glory of them to that Mercy of his, which endureth for ever. And when thus a continual Regard is had to that Mercy, an abundant Sweetness is thereby infus'd into all the Comforts of this Life; for as the Wrath and Curse of God is the Wormwood and the Gall in all the Afflictions and Miseries of this Life, so his Loving Kindness is the Honey and Oil in all the Comforts and Enjoyments of this Life; that's it that is better than Life, and which is abundantly satisfying; which puts Gladness into the Heart beyond the Joy of Harvest; Then the Nations are glad, and sing for Joy, when not only the Earth yields her Increase, but with it, God, even their own God gives them his Blessing; And when the Church is brought

Lam 3. 19,

Psal. 63. 3, 5.

Psa. 4. 6, 7,

Psal. 67. 4, 6.

brought to such a Sense of God's Grace, as to cry out, *How great is his Goodness*, Zach. 9. 17. *and how great is his Beauty*; it follows that then *Corn shall make the young Men cheerful*, intimating that we have no Joy of our Enjoyments, no true Joy of them, 'till we are led by these Streams to the Fountain. *To the pure, all things* Tit. 1. 14. *are pure*; and the more pure they are, the more pleasant they are.

Fifthly, To be Religious, is to cast all our Cares upon God, and to commit all our Ways and Works to him, with an assurance that he will care for us; And is not this pleasant? 'Tis a very sensible Pleasure to be eas'd of some pressing Burthen, which we are ready to sink under; And Care is such a Burthen: 'Tis a *Heaviness in the Heart of Man*, which maketh it to stoop; Now true Religion enables us to acknowledge God in all our Ways, and then depend upon him to direct our Steps, and follow his Directions, not leaning to our own Understanding; it is to refer ourselves, and the disposal of every thing that concerneth us in this World, to God, and to his Will and Wisdom, with an intire Acquiescence in his Award and Arbitration; *Here I am, let the Lord do with me, as seemeth good in his Eyes*. Sam. 15.

To be truly Godly, is to have our Wills melted into the Will of God in every thing, and to say *Amen* to it, not only as a Prayer, but as a Covenant, *Father in Heaven, Thy Will be done; not as I will, but as thou wilt*; 'Tis to be fully

fully reconcil'd to all the Disposals of the Divine Providence, and Methods of Divine Grace both concerning others and ourselves; to be satisfy'd that *All is well that God doth*, and will appear so at last when the *Mystery of God* shall be finished; And how doth the Mind enjoy itself that is come to this; How easy is it! 'tis not only freed from racking Anxieties, but fill'd with *pleasing Prospects*; Fears are hereby silenced, and Hopes kept up and elevated; Nothing can come amiss to those, who have thus been taught by the Principles of their Religion, to *make the best of that which is*, because it is the Will of God; which is *making a Virtue of Necessity*.

What *Uncomfortable Lives* do they live, that are continually *fretting* at that which cannot be *help'd*, quarrelling with the Disposals of Providence, when they cannot *alter* them, and thus by *Contracting Guilt* as well as by *Indulging Grief*, doubling every Burthen; But how *pleasantly* do they travel through the Wilderness of this World, that constantly *follow the Pillar of Cloud and Fire*, and accommodate themselves to their Lot whatever it is; that like *Paul*, through Christ strengthening them, have learn'd *in every Estate to be content, know how to want, and how to abound*.

Phil. 4 11,
12, 13.

Religion brings the *Mind* to the *Condition*, whatever it is, and so makes it easy, because the Condition, tho' it be not in every thing to our Mind, it is according to God's Mind, who in all
Oc-

Occurrences performeth the Thing that is Job 23. 14.
 appointed for us, and will make all work
 for good to them that love him. When
 the Psalmist had directed us to *Delight* Psa. 37. 45.
 ourselves always in the Lord, that is, to
 make our Religion a constant Pleasure
 to ourselves, he directs us in Order
 thereunto to *Commit our Way unto the*
Lord, to trust also in him that he will
 bring it to pass, so as that we shall have
 the Desire of our Heart. And when St.
 Paul had encourag'd us to be careful for Phil. 4. 6.
 nothing, but in every thing to make our
 Requests known to God, he assures us, that
 if we do so, the Peace of God which passeth
 all Understanding, shall keep our Hearts
 and Minds.

Sixtly, To be Religious is to Rejoyce Phil. 3. 1.
 in the Lord always: And is not that plea- — 4. 4.
 sant? It is not only one of the Privi-
 ledges of our Religion that we may re-
 joyce, but it is made one of the Duties
 of it; We are defective in our Reli-
 gion, if we do not live a Life of Com-
 placency in God, in his Being, his At-
 tributes, and Relations to us. It should
 be a constant Pleasure to us, to think
 that there is a God, that he is such a
 One as the Scripture has reveal'd him
 to be, a Being infinitely Wise and
 Powerful, Holy, Just and Good; That
 this God governs the World, and gives
 Law to all the Creatures; That he is
 our Owner and Ruler, that in his Hand
 our Breath is, in his Hand our Times,
 our Hearts, and all our Ways are; Thus
 certainly, it is, and thus it must be, and
 happy

happy they that can *please* themselves with these Thoughts, as those must needs be a constant Terror to themselves, who could wish it were otherwise.

They who thus *delight in God* have always something, and something very commanding too to *delight in*; a Fountain of Joy that can never be either *exhausted*, or *stopp'd up*; and to which they may always have Access. How Eccles. 11. 8. few are there, that *live many Days*, and *rejoyce in them all*! Such a thing is *suppos'd*, indeed, but it is never *found true* in any, but those that make God their Joy. the Gladness of their Joy, as the Psalmist expresseth it, their *exceeding Joy*; and in him it is intended the Joy should terminate, when we are bid to 1 Thes. 5. 16 *Rejoyce evermore*.

The Conversion of the Nations to Christ, and his Holy Religion, is often prophesy'd of in the Old Testament, under the Notion of their being brought into a State of Holy Joy. Let the Earth *rejoyce* that the Lord reigns, and let the Multitude of Isles be glad thereof; Rejoyce 97. 1. 100. 1. ye Gentiles with his People. The Gospel Rom. 15. 10. is Glad Tidings of great Joy to all People; When Samaria receiv'd the Gospel, Acts 8. 8. there was great Joy in that City; so essential is Joy to Religion.

And the Conversation of those that are joyn'd to the Lord, when it is as it should be, is *Cheerful* and *Joyful*: They are call'd upon to walk in the Light of the Lord, and to sing in the Ways of the Lord: and

and to serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and gladness of Heart in the abundance of all things, yea, and in the want of all things too, Tho' the Fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no Fruit in the Vine: Has God now accepted thee, and thy Works in Jesus Christ; Go thy way, eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine with a Merry Heart. It is the Will of God, that his People should be a Chearful People, that his Israel should rejoice in every good thing which the Lord their God giveth them; so that it is their own Fault if they have not a Continual Feast, and be not made to rejoyce with the Out-goings of every Morning and every Evening, for the Compassions of that God in whom they rejoyce, are not only Constant, but New and Fresh daily.

Seventhly, To be Religious, is to make a Business of Praising God: And is not that Pleasant? It is, indeed, very Unpleasant, and much against the grain, to be oblig'd continually to praise one that is not worthy of Praise; But what can be more pleasant, than to praise him to whom all Praise is due, and ours particularly; to whom, we and all the Creatures lye under all possible Obligations; who is worthy of, and yet exalted far above all Blessing and Praise; from whom all Things are, and therefore, to whom all Things ought to be.

There is little Pleasure in Praising one, whom none praise that are wise and good, but only the Fools in Israel; But in Praising God we concur with the Ble-

fed Angels in Heaven, and all the Saints, and do it *in Consort* with them, who the more they know him, the more they praise him. *Bless the Lord, ye his Angels, and all his Hosts; and therefore, with what Pleasure can I cast in my Mite into such a Treasury, Bless the Lord, O my Soul.*

There is little Pleasure in Praising one, who will not regard our Praises, nor take Notice of our Expressions of Esteem and Affection; But when we offer to God the Sacrifice of Praise continually (according to the Obligation which our Religion lays upon us) that is the Fruit of our Lips giving Thanks to his Name, we offer it to one that takes Notice of it, accepts it, is well-pleas'd with it, smells a Savour of Rest from it, and will not fail to meet those with his Mercies, that follow him with their Praises; for he hath said, that they that offer Praise glorify him; such a favourable Construction doth he put upon it, and such a high Stamp upon course Metal.

Now what is it that we have to do in Religion, but to praise God; We are taken into Covenant with God, that we should be to him for a Name, and for a Praise, are called into his marvellous Light, that we should shew forth the Praises of him that called us; And how can we be more comfortably employ'd? They are, therefore, Blessed, that dwell in God's House, for they will be still praising him; And it is

Heb. 13. 15.

Gen. 8. 21,

Jer. 13. 11.

1 Pet. 2. 9

Psa 1. 84. 4.

a good thing, good in itself, and good for us; 'tis very pleasant to give Thanks *Psal. 135. 31* unto the Lord, and to shew forth his Praises; — 92. 1. for we cannot do ourselves a greater Honour, or fetch in a greater Satisfaction, than by giving unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name: It is not only a Heaven upon Earth, but it is a Pledge and Earnest of a Heaven in Heaven too; for if we be here every Day blessing God, we shall be Praising *Psal. 145. 2* him for ever and ever; for thus all that shall go to Heaven hereafter, begin their Heaven now. Compare the Hellish Pleasure, which some take, in Profaning the Name of God, and the Heavenly Pleasure, which others take, in Glorifying it, and tell me which is preferable.

Eighthly, To be Religious, is to have all our Inordinate Appetites corrected and regulated: And is not that Pleasant? To be eas'd from Pain is a sensible Pleasure; and to be eas'd from that which is the Disease and Disorder of the Mind is a mental Pleasure. Those certainly, live a most unpleasant, uncomfortable Life, that are *Slaves* to their Appetites, and indulge themselves in the Gratifications of Sense tho' never so Criminal; that lay the Reins in the Neck of their Lusts, and withhold not their Hearts from any Joy. The Drunkards and Unclean, tho' they are said to give themselves to their Pleasures, yet really they estrange themselves from that which is true Pleasure, and subject

themselves to a continual Pain and Uneasiness.

- Luke 21.35. The Carnal Appetite is often *overcharg'd*, and that's a Burthen to the Body, and its Distemper; when enough is as good as a *Feast*, I wonder what Pleasure it can be to take *more than enough*; And the Appetite the more it is *indulg'd*, the more *Humour-som* and *Troublesom* it grows; 'tis *surfeited* but not *satisfied*; it doth but grow more *impetuous* and more *imperious*; 'tis true of the Body, what
- Prov. 29.21. Solomon says of a Servant, *He that delicately bringeth up his Servant from a Child, shall have him become his Son, nay, his Master, at the length.* If we suffer the Body to get Dominion over the Soul, so that the Interests of the Soul must be *damag'd*, to gratify the Inclinations of the Body, it will be a *Tyrant*, as a *Usurper* generally is, and will *rule with Rigour*; and as God said
- 1 Sam 8.18. to the People, when by Samuel he had shew'd them *the manner of the King* that they chose, when they rejected his Government, *you will cry out in that day because of your King which ye have chosen you, and the Lord will not hear*; so it is with those that bring themselves into Disorders, Diseases and Terrors, by the Indulgence of their Lusts; who can pity them? they are
- Prov. 23.29. well enough serv'd for setting such a *King over them.* *Who hath Woe? Who hath Sorrow?* — None so much as they that *tarry long at the Wine*, tho' they think

think themselves to have the Monopoly of Pleasure! The Truth is, they that live in these Pleasures are *dead* 1 Tim. 5. 6. *while they live*; and while they fancy themselves to take the greatest Liberty, really find themselves in the greatest Slavery, for they are *led Captive by Satan* at 2 Per. 2. 19. *his Will*; and of whom a Man is overcome, of the same is he brought in Bondage.

And if the Carnal Appetite have not gain'd such a compleat Possession, as quite to extinguish all the Remains of Reason and Conscience, those Noble Powers, since they are not permitted to give Law, will give Disturbance; and there are few that have so full an Enjoyment of the forbidden Pleasures of Sense, but that they sometimes feel the Checks of Reason, and the Terrors of Conscience, which marr their Mirth, as the Hand-Writing on the Wall did Belshazzar's, and make their Lives uncomfortable to them, and justly so, which makes them the more so.

Now to be Religious, is to have the exorbitant Power of those Lusts and Appetites broken, and since they will not be satisfy'd, to have them mortify'd, and brought into a quiet Submission to the commanding Faculties of the Soul, according to the Direction of the Divine Law; and thus the Peace is preserv'd, by supporting good Order and Government in the Soul.

Those, certainly, live the most easy, healthful, pleasant Lives, that are most sober, temperate, and chaste; that allow

not themselves to eat of any forbidden Tree, tho' *pleasant to the Eye*; that live regularly, and are the Masters not the
 2 Cor. 9. 27. Servants of *their own Bellies*; that keep under their Bodies, and bring them into Subjection to Religion and right Reason; and by laying the Axe to the Root, and breaking *vicious Habits, Dispositions and Desires*, in the Strength of Divine Grace have made the refraining of *vicious Acts* very easy and pleasant. If through the Spirit we mortify the Deeds of the Body, we live, we live pleasantly.

Rom. 8. 13.

Ninthly, To be Religious, is to have all our *Unruly Passions likewise govern'd and subdu'd*: And is not that pleasant? Much of our Torment ariseth from our intemperate Heats, *Discontent* at the Providence of God, *Fretfulness* at every cross Occurrence, *Fear* of every imaginary Evil, *Envy* at those that are in better State than ourselves, *Malice* against those that have injur'd us, and an *angry-Resentment* of every the least Provocation; These are Thorns and Briars in the Soul; These spoil all our Enjoyments, both of ourselves, and of our Friends, and of our God too; These make Mens Lives *unpleasant*, and them a Terror to themselves, and to all about them.

But when by the Grace of God these *Roots of Bitterness* are pluck'd up, which bear so much *Gall and Wormwood*, and we have learn'd of our Master, to be
 Mat. 11. 29. meek and lowly in Heart, we find Rest to
 OUR

our Souls, we enter into the pleasant Land. There is scarce any of the Graces of a Christian, that have more of a present Tranquillity and Satisfaction, both inherent in them, and annexed to them, than this of Meekness. *The Meek shall eat, and be satisfy'd; They shall inherit the Earth; They shall delight themselves in the Abundance of Peace; And they shall increase their Joy in the Lord, which nothing diminisheth more than ungovern'd Passion; for that grieves the Spirit of Grace, the Comforter, and provokes him to withdraw.*

Psal. 22. 26.

Mat. 5. 5.

Psal. 37. 11.

Isa. 29. 19.

Eph. 4. 30,
31.

How pleasant is it, for a Man to be Master of his own Thoughts, to have a Calmness and Serenity in his own Mind, as those have, that have Rule over their own Spirits, and thereby are kept in Peace. Peace, That will break an angry Man's Heart, that will not break a meek Man's Sleep.

Tenthly, To be Religious, is to dwell in Love to all our Brethren, and to do all the Good we can in this World: And is not that pleasant? Love is the Fulfilling of the Law; 'Tis the second great Commandment to Love our Neighbour as ourselves; All our Duty is sum'd up in one Word, which as it is a short Word, so it is a sweet Word, Love. Behold how good, and how pleasant it is to live in holy Love; 'tis not only pleasing to God, and amiable in the Eyes of all good Men, but it will be very comfortable to ourselves; for they that dwell in Love, dwell in God, and God in them.

Rom. 13. 10.

Psa. 133. 1.

John 4. 16,

Re.

Religion teacheth us to be easy to our Relations, and study to *please them well in all Things*, neither to give, nor resent Provocations, to bear with their Infirmities, to be courteous, and obliging to all with whom we converse, to keep our Temper, and the Possession and Enjoyment of our own Souls, whatever Affronts are given us; And can any Thing contribute more to our *Living pleasantly*?

By Love we enjoy our Friends, and have Communion with them in all their Comforts, and so add to our own; *Rejoycing with them that do rejoyce.* By Love we recommend ourselves to their Love, and what more delightful, than to love, and be belov'd? Love is the very Element of a pure and sanctify'd Mind, the sweet Air it breathes in, the Cement of the best Society, which contributes so much to the Pleasure of Human Life. The Sheep of Christ united in Flocks by the Bond of Holy Love, lye down together in the *Green Pastures* by the *Still Waters*, where there is not only *Plenty*, but *Pleasure*. The

¹Thel. 3.9. Apostle exhorting his Friends to be of good Comfort, and to go on chearfully in their Christian Course, exhorts them in Order to that, to be of one Mind, and to live in Peace, and then the God of Love and Peace will be with them.

²Cor. 13.11

And what Pleasure comparable to that of *Doing good*? 'Tis some Participation of the Pleasure of the Eternal Mind, who *delights to shew Mercy*, and

and to do good; Nay, Besides the Divinity of this Pleasure, there is a Humanity in it; The Nature of Man, if it be not debauch'd and vitiated, cannot but take Pleasure in making any Body safe, and easy. It was a Pleasure to Job, to think, that he had caus'd the Widows Heart to sing for Joy, had been Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame, and a Father to the Poor, and that they had been warmed with the Fleece of his Sheep. The Pleasure that a good Man hath in Doing good, confirms that Saying of our Saviour's, That it is more blessed to give, than to receive.

Eleventhly, To be Religious, is to live a Life of Communion with God: And is not that pleasant? Good Christians being taken into Friendship, have Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and make it their Business to keep up that Holy Converse and Correspondence. Herein consists the Life of Religion; to converse with God, to receive his Communications of Mercy and Grace to us, and to return Pious and Dévout Affections to him; And can any Life be more comfortable? Is there any Conversation, that can possibly be so pleasant as this to a Soul that knows itself, and its own Powers and Interests.

In Reading and Meditating upon the Word of God, we hear God speaking to us with a great deal of Condescension to us, and Concern for us, speaking freely to us, as a Man doth to his Friend,

Friend, and about our own Business, speaking *comfortably* to us in Compassion to our distressful Case; and what can be more pleasant to those who have a Value for the Favour of God, and are in Care about the Interests of their own Souls; *When their Judges are overthrown in Stony Places, they shall bear my Words for they are sweet*; the Words of God will be very sweet to those who see themselves *overthrown* by Sin, and so they will be to all that love God; with what an Air of Pleasure doth the Spouse say, *It is the Voice of my Beloved*, and he speaks to me.

In Prayer and Praise we speak to God, and we have Liberty of Speech, have leave to utter all our Words before the Lord, as *Jeptab* did his in *Mizpeh*; we speak to one whose Ear is open, is bow'd to our Prayers, nay, to whom the Prayer of the Upright is a Delight, which cannot but make it very much a Delight to them to Pray. 'Tis not only an ease to a burthen'd Spirit to unbosom itself to such a Friend as God is, but a Pleasure to a Soul that knows its own Extraction, to have such a Boldness, as all Believers have, to enter into the Holiest.

Nay, we may as truly have Communion with God in Providences as in Ordinances, and in the Duties of Common Conversation, as in Religious Exercises; and thus that Pleasure may become a Continual Feast to our Souls. What can be more pleasant, than to have a God

God to go to, whom we may acknowledge in all our Ways, and whom our Eyes *Pla. 25. 15.* are ever towards; to see all our Comforts coming to us from his Hand, and all our Crosses too; to refer ourselves, and all Events that are concerning us to his Dispose, with an Assurance that he will order all for the best. What a Pleasure is it, to behold the Beauty of the Lord in all his Works; and to taste the Goodness of the Lord in all his Gifts; in all our Expectations to see every Man's Judgment proceeding from him; to make God our Hope, and God our Fear, and God our Joy, and God our Life, and God our All; This is to live a Life of Communion with God.

Twelfthly, To be Religious, is to keep up a constant believing Prospect of the Glory to be reveal'd: It is to set Eternal Life before us as the Mark we aim at, and the Prize we run for, and to seek the *Col. 3. 1.* Things that are Above: And is not this pleasant? It is our Duty to think much of Heaven, to place our Happiness in its Joys, and thitherward to direct our Aims and Pursuits; And what Subject, what Object can be more pleasing? We have need, sometimes, to frighten ourselves from Sin, with the Terrors of Eternal Death; But it is much more a Part of our Religion, to encourage ourselves in our Duty, with the Hopes of that Eternal Life which God hath given us, *1 John 5. 11.* that Life which is in his Son.

What is Christianity, but having our *Phil. 3. 20.* Conversation in Heaven, trading with the New

New Jerusalem, and keeping up a constant Correspondence with that Better Countrey, *that is the Heavenly*; as the Countrey we *belong to*, and are in *Expectation of*, to which we remit our best Effects and best Affections; where our Head and Home is, and where we hope and long to be.

Then we are as we *should be*, when our Minds are in a Heavenly Frame and Temper; Then we *do as we should do*, when we are employ'd in the Heavenly Work, as we are capable of Doing it in this lower World; And is not our Religion then a *Heaven upon Earth*? If there be a *Fulness of Joy and Pleasure* in that *Glory and Happiness*, which is *Grace and Holiness* perfected; There cannot but be an Abundance of Joy and Pleasure in that *Grace and Holiness*, which is *Glory and Happiness* begun. If there will be such a compleat Satisfaction in *Vision and Fruition*, there cannot but be a great Deal in *Faith and Hope*, so well founded, as that of the Saints is. Hence we are said, *Believing to rejoice with Joy unspeakable*; and *to be fill'd with Joy and Peace in Believing*.

1 Pet. 1. 8.

Rom. 15. 13

It is the Character of all God's People, that they are *born from Heaven*, and *bound for Heaven*, and have *laid up their Treasure in Heaven*; And they that know how great, how rich, how glorious, and how well secur'd, that Happiness is to all Believers, cannot but own, that if that be their Character,

rafter, it cannot but be their unspeakable Comfort and Delight.

Now lay all this together, and then tell me, whether Religion be not a pleasant thing indeed, when even the Duties of it themselves are so much the Delights of it; And whether we do not serve a good Master, who has thus made our Work its own Wages, and has graciously provided Two Heavens for those, that never deserv'd One.

CHAP. III.

The Pleasantness of Religion prov'd from the Provision that is made, for the Comfort of those that are Religious, and the Priviledges they are entitl'd to.

WE have already found by Enquiry (O that we could all say, we had found by Experience!) that the very Principles and Practices of Religion themselves have a great deal of Pleasantness in them, and the one half of that has not been told us; And yet the Comfort that attends Religion, and follows after it, cannot but exceed that which is *inherent* in it, and comes with it. If the *Work of Righteousness* be Peace, Isa, 32. 17. much more is the *Effect of Righteousness* so. If the *Precepts* of Religion have such an Air of Sweetness in them, what then have the *Comforts* of it? Behold

G Happy

Happy is the People, even in this World, whose God is the Lord.

We must conclude, that they that walk in the Ways of *Holy Wisdom*, have, or may have, true *Peace and Pleasure*; for God hath both *taken Care* for their Comfort, and given them *Cause* to be comforted, so that if they do not live *easily and pleasantly*, it is their own Fault.

First, The God whom they serve, hath, *in general*, taken Care for their Comfort, and has done enough to convince them, that it is his Will they should be comforted; that he not only gives them *Leave* to be *cheerful*, but would have them to be so; for what could have been done more to the Satisfaction of his Family, than he has done in it.

1. There is a *Purchase made* of Peace and Pleasure for them, so that they come to it *fairly*, and by a good Title. He that purchas'd them a *peculiar People* to himself, took Care they should be a *pleasant People*, that their Comforts might be a Credit to his Cause, and the Joy of his Servants in his Work, might be a Reputation to his Family.

Rom. 5. 1, We have not only *Peace with God* through our Lord *Jesus Christ*, but Peace in our own Consciences too, not only Peace *above*, but Peace *within*; and nothing less will *pacify* an offended Conscience, than that which *satisfy'd* an offended God. Yet this is not all, we have not only *inward Peace*, but we *rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God*, and triumph
over,

our, nay, we triumph in Tribulation.

Think what a vast Expence (if I may so say) God was at; of Blood and Treasure, to lay up for us, and secure to us, not only a future Bliss, but present Pleasure, and the Felicities not only of our Home, but of our Way. Christ had Trouble, that we might have Peace; Pain, that we might have Pleasure; Sorrow, that we might have Joy. He wore the Crown of Thorns, that he might crown us with Roses, and a lasting Joy might be upon our Heads. He put on the Spirit of Heaviness, that we might be array'd with the Garments of Praise. The Garden was the Place of his Agony, that it might be to us a Garden of Eden, and there it was, that he indented with his Prosecutors, for the Disciples, upon his Surrendering himself, saying in Effect to all Agonies, as he did to them, *If ye seek me let these go their Way; If I be resign'd to Trouble, let them depart in Peace.* John 18. 8.

This was that which made Wisdom's Ways Pleasantness, the everlasting Righteousness, which Christ, by dying, wrought out, and brought in. This is the Foundation of the Treaty of Peace, and consequently the Fountain of all those Consolations, which Believers are happy in. Then it is, That all the Seed of Israel glory, when they can each of them say, *In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength;* And then Israel shall dwell safely, in a holy Security, when they have learned to call Christ

by this Name, *The Lord our Righteousness*. If Christ had not gone to the Father, as our High Priest, with the
 John 14. 28. Blood of sprinkling in his Hand, we could never have *Rejoyc'd*; but must have been always *Trembling*.

Christ is our *Peace*, not only as he
 Eph. 2. 14, 17. made *Peace* for us with God, but as he preached to them that were *afar off*, and to them that were *nigh*; and has engag'd, that his People, whenever they may have *Trouble* in the World, shall have

John 16. 33. *Peace in him*; upon the Assurance of which, they may be of good *Cheer*, whatever happens. It is observable, that in the Close of that Ordinance, which Christ instituted, in the *Night wherein he was betrayed*, to be a Memorial of his Sufferings, he both sung a *Hymn of Joy*, and preached a *Sermon of Comfort*, to intimate, that that which he design'd in Dying for us, was to
 2 Thes. 2. 16 give us *everlasting Consolation*, and good *Hope through Grace*, and that we should aim at, in all our Commemorations of his Death.

Peace and Comfort are bought, and paid for; If any of those who were design'd to have the Benefit of this Purchase, deprive themselves of it, let them bear the Blame, but let him have the Praise who intended them the Kindness; and who will take Care, that tho' his Kindness be *defer'd*, it shall not be *defeated*; for tho' his Disciples may be sorrowful for a time, *their Sorrow*
 John 16. 20. shall be turned into *Joy*.

2. There

2. There are Promises made to Believers of Peace and Pleasure; The Benefits Christ bought for them are convey'd to them, and settled upon them in the Covenant of Grace; which is well order'd in all Things, for the Comfort and Satisfaction of those, who have made that Covenant all their Salvation, and all their Desire. There it is, that Light is sown for the Righteous, and it will come up again in due time; The Promises of that Covenant are the Wells of Salvation, out of which they draw Water with Joy; the Breasts of Consolation, out of which, by Faith, they suck, and are satisfy'd. 2 Sam. 23.5. Isa. 22, 3. — 66, 12.

The Promises of the Old Testament, that point at Gospel Times, speak mostly of this as the Blessing reserv'd for those Times, that there should be great Joy and Rejoicing; The Desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the Rose; Arise, shine, for thy Light is come; for the Design of the Gospel was to make Religion a more pleasant thing than it had been, by Freeing it both from the burdensome Services which the Jews were under, and from the superstitious Fears, which the Heathen kept themselves, and one another in Awe with; and by Enlarging the Priviledges of God's People, and making them easier to come at.

Every particular Believer is interested in the Promises made to the Church, and may put them in Suit, and fetch in the Comfort contained in them, as every Citizen has the Bene-

- fit of the Charter, even the meanest. What a Pleasure may one take in Applying such a Promise as that, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*: Or that, *All things shall work for good to them that love God*. These, and such as these,
- Luke 1.79. *guide our Feet in the Ways of Peace*, and as they are a firm Foundation on which to build our Hopes, so they are a full Fountain from which to draw our Joys.
- 2 Pet. 1.4. By the exceeding great, and precious Promises, we partake of a Divine Nature, of this Instance of it as much as any, a comfortable Enjoyment of ourselves; And by all the other Promises that Promise is fullfill'd, *My Servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; my Servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; my Servants shall rejoyce, but ye shall be ashamed; my Servants shall sing for Joy of Heart, but ye shall cry for Sorrow of Heart*; And the Encouragement giv'n to all the Churches
- Isa: 65. 14, 25. *faithful Friends is made good, Rejoyce ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her all ye that love her*.
- Isa: 66. 10. *faithful Friends is made good, Rejoyce ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her all ye that love her*.

3. There is Provision made for the Application of that which is purchas'd, and promis'd to the Saints. What will it avail, that there is Wine in the Vessel, if it be not drawn out? That there is a Cordial made up, if it be not administer'd? Care is, therefore, taken, that the People of God be assisted, in making use of the Comforts treasur'd up for them in the Everlasting Covenant.

A Religious Life, One may well expect, should be a very comfortable Life,
for

for infinite Wisdom has *devis'd* all the Means that could be to make it so; *What could have been done more for God's Vine-^{Isa. 5. 4.} yard, to make it flourishing as well as fruitful, than what he has done in it?* There is not only an over-flowing Fullness of Oil in the *Good Olive*, but *Golden Pipes* (as in the Prophet's Vision) for the Conveyance of that Oil to the Lamps, to keep them burning. When God would himself furnish a Paradise for a beloved Creature, there was nothing wanting that might contribute to the Comfort of it; in it was planted *Every Tree that was pleasant to the Sight, Gen. 2. 8, 9. and good for Food:* So in the Gospel there is a Paradise planted, for all the faithful Off-spring of the second Adam; A *Canaan*, a Land flowing with Milk and ^{Dan. 8. 9.} Honey, a pleasant Land, a Rest for all the spiritual Seed of Abraham: Now as God put Adam into Paradise, and brought Israel into Canaan, so he has provided for the Giving of Possession to all Believers, of all that Comfort and Pleasure that is laid up for them. As in the Garden of Eden, Innocency and Pleasure were twisted together, so in the Gospel of Christ, Grace and Peace, Righteousness and Peace have ^{Psal. 85. 10.} kissed each other; and all is done that could be wish'd, in Order to our Entying into this ^{Heb. 4. 3, 9.} Rest, this blessed Sabbathism. So that if we have not the Benefit of it, we may thank ourselves, God would have comforted us, and we would not be comforted; our Souls refused it.

Four Things are done with this View, that those who live a Godly Life, may live a comfortable, pleasant Life; and 'tis Pity they should receive the Grace of God herein in vain.

- (1.) The *Blessed Spirit* is sent to be the *Comforter*; He doth also enlighten, convince, and sanctify, but he hath his Name from this Part of his Office, he is *ὁ παρακλητος*, *The Comforter*. As the *Son of God* was sent to be the *Consolation* Luke 2. 25. of *Israel*, to provide *Matter* for *Comfort*, so the *Spirit of God* was sent to be the *Comforter*, to apply the *Consolation* which the Lord Jesus has provided. Christ came to *make Peace*, and the Spirit to *spread Peace*, and to *make us to hear* Psa. 51. 3. *Joy and Gladness*, even such as will cause *broken Bones* themselves to *rejoice*. Christ having wrought out the *Salvation* for us, the *Work of the Spirit* is to give us the *Comfort* of it; Hence the *Joy of the Saints* is said to be the *Joy of the Holy Ghost*; because it is his Office to administer such *Comforts*, as tend to the filling of us with *Joy*. 1 Thes. 1. 6.

God by his Spirit moving on the Face of the Waters, made the World according to the Word of his Power; And by his Spirit moving on the Souls of his People, even when they are a perfect Ua. 57. 19. *Ghaos*, he creates the *Fruit of the Lips*, *Peace*, the Product of the Word of his Promise; and if he did not create it, it would never be; and we must not only attend to the Word of God speaking to us, but submit to the Spirit of God work-

working upon us with the Word.

The Spirit as a *Comforter*, was given not only for the Relief of the Saints in the *suffering* Ages of the Church, but to continue with the Church *always to the End*, for the Comfort of Believers in reference to their constant Sorrows both *Temporal* and *Spiritual*; And what a Favour is this to the Church, no less needful, no less advantagious than the Sending of the Son of God to save us, and for which, therefore, we should be no less thankful. Let this Article never be left out of our Songs of Praise; but let us always give Thanks to him, who not only sent his *Son* to make *Satisfaction* for us, for his *Mercy endureth for ever*, but sent his *Spirit* to give *Satisfaction* to us, for his *Mercy endureth for ever*; sent his Spirit not only to work in us the Disposition of Children towards him, but also to witness to our Adoption, and seal us to the Day of Redemption.

The Spirit is given to be our *Teacher*, and to lead us into all Truth, and as such he is a *Comforter*; for by rectifying our Mistakes, and setting things in a *true Light*, he silenceth our Doubts and Fears, and sets things in a *Pleasant Light*. The Spirit is our *Remembrancer*, to put us in Mind of that which we do know, and as such he is a *Comforter*; for like the Disciples, we distrust Christ in every Exigence, because we forget the *Miracles of the Loaves*. The Mat. 16. 9. Spirit is our *Sanctifier*; by him Sin is mortified, and Grace wrought, and strengthen'd,

strengthen'd, and as such he is our *Comforter*; for nothing tends so much to make us *Easy*, as that which tends to make us *Holy*. The Spirit is our *Guide*, and we are said to be led by the Spirit, and as such he is our *Comforter*; for under his Conduct, we cannot but be led into *Ways of Pleasantness*, to the *green Pastures*, and *still Waters*.

(2.) The Scriptures are written that
 1 John 1. 4. *our Joy may be full*; that we may have that Joy which alone is filling, and hath that in it, which will fill up the Vacancies of other Joys, and make up their Deficiencies; And that we may be full of that Joy; may have more and more of it, may be wholly taken up with it, and may come, at length, to the full Perfection of it in the Kingdom of Glory: These things are written to you, not only that you may receive the Word with Joy, at first, when it's a new thing to you, but that your Joy may be full, and constant. The Word of God is the main Pipe, by which Comfort is convey'd from Christ, the Fountain of Life, to all the Saints. That Book, which the Lamb that was slain, took out of the Right Hand of him that sat on the Throne, is that which we are by Faith to feed upon and digest, and to fill our Souls with; and we shall find that it will, like Ezekiel's Roll, be in our Mouths as Honey for Sweetness; and the Opening of its Seals will put a new
 Song into our Mouth.

Ezek. 3. 3.

Rev. 1. 9.

Scrip-

Scripture Light is pleasant, much more sweet, more pleasant, than for the Eyes to behold the Sun; the manner of its Conveyance is such, as makes it abundantly more so, for God speaks to us after the manner of Men, in our own Language. The Comforts which the Scripture speaks to us, are the sure Mercies of David, such as we may depend upon; and it is continually speaking; The Scriptures we may have always with us, and whenever we will, we may have Recourse to them; so that we need not be to seek for Cordials at any time! The Word is nigh Rom. 10. 1. thee, in thy House, and in thy Hand, and 'tis thy own fault if it be not in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart. Nor is it a Spring shut up, or a Fountain seal'd; those that compare Spiritual Things with Spiritual, will find the Scripture its own Interpreter, and Spiritual Pleasure to flow from it as easily, as plentifully, to all that have Spiritual Senses exercised, as the Honey from the Comb.

All the Saints have found Pleasure in the Word of God, and those who have given up themselves to be led, and rul'd by it. 'Twas such a Comfort to David in his Distress, that if he had not had that for his Delight, he should have perished in his Affliction; Psal. 119. 92. Nay, he had the Joy of God's Word to be his continual Entertainment, Thy Statutes have been my Songs in the House Psal. 119. 54. of my Pilgrimage: --- Thy Words were found, saith Jeremiah, and I did Eat them,

them; feast upon them with as much Pleasure, as ever any Hungry Man did upon his necessary Food, or Epicure upon his Dainties; I perfectly regaled myself with them; and *thy Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart*; And we not only come short of their Experiences, but frustrate God's gracious Intentions, if we do not find Pleasure in the Word of God; Rom. 15. 4. *for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our Learning, that we, through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures, might have Hope.*

(3.) Holy Ordinances were instituted for the Furtherance of our Comfort, and to make our Religion Pleasant unto us; The Conversation of Friends with each other, is reckon'd one of the greatest Delights of this World, now Ordinances are instituted for the keeping up of our Communion with God, which is the greatest Delight of the Soul that's ally'd to the other World. God appointed to the Jewish Church, a great many Feasts in the Year (and but one Fast, and that but for one Day) on Purpose for this End, that they Deut. 16. 17, *might rejoice before the Lord their God, they, and their Families.*

Prayer is an Ordinance of God, appointed for the Fetching in of that Peace and Pleasure which is provided for us. It is intended to be not only the Ease of our Hearts, by casting our Burthen upon God, as it was to Hannah, who when she had pray'd, went her Way, and

and did not, and her Countenance was no more sad; but to be the Joy of our Hearts, by putting the Promises in Suit, and improving our Acquaintance with Heaven, Ask, and ye shall receive, that your Joy may be full. *John 16, 24.* There is a Throne of Grace erected for us to come to; A Mediator of Grace appointed, in whose Name to come; The Spirit of Grace given to help our Infirmities, and an Answer of Peace promis'd to every Prayer of Faith, and all this, that we might fetch in not only sanctifying, but comforting Grace in every Time of need. *God's Heb. 4, 16.* House, in which Wisdom's Children dwell, is call'd A House of Prayer, and thither God brings them, on Purpose to make them joyful. *Isa. 56, 7.*

Singing of Psalms is a Gospel Ordinance, that is design'd to contribute to the Pleasantness of our Religion; not only to express, but to excite, and to increase our Holy Joy; In Singing to the Lord, we make a joyful Noise to the Rock of our Salvation. When the Apostle had warn'd all Christians to take heed of Drunkenness, Be not drunk with Wine, wherein is Excess, lest they should think, that thereby he restrain'd them from any Mirth that would do them good, he directs them instead of the Song of the Drunkard, when the Heart is merry with Wine, to entertain themselves with the Songs of Angels; Speaking to yourselves (when you are dispos'd to please yourselves) in Psalms, and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, Singing, and making Melody

in your Hearts to the Lord. There is no more of *Substance* in this Ordinance, but the *Word* and *Prayer* put together, but the *Circumstance* of the *Voice* and *Tune* being a *natural Means* of *Affecting* our *Hearts*, both with the *One* and with the *Other*, God in *Condescension* to our *State*, hath been pleas'd to make a *particular Ordinance* of it, to shew how much it is his *Will*, that we should

1am. 5. 13. be *Cheerful*. *Is any merry?* let him sing *Psalms*. *Is any vainly merry?* let him suppress the *Vanity*, and turn the *Mirth* into a right *Channel*; He need not *banish*, or *abjure* the *Mirth*, but let it be *holy*, *heavenly Mirth*, and in that *Mirth* let him sing *Psalms*. *Nay, Is any afflicted*, and *merry* in his *Affliction*, let him shew **Act. 16. 25.** it by *Singing Psalms*, as *Paul* and *Silas* did *in the Stocks*.

The *Lord's Day* is appointed to be a *pleasant Day*, a *Day of Holy Rest*, *nay*, and a *Day of Holy Joy*; a *Thanksgiving* **Mat. 23. 24.** *Day*; *This is the Day which the Lord hath made*, *we will rejoyce*, and *be glad in it*. The *Psalms* and *Song* for the *Sabbath-Day* **Psal. 92. 1.** begins thus, *It is a good Thing to give Thanks to the Lord*. So far were the *Primitive Christians* carry'd in this *Notion*, That the *Lord's Day* was design'd for *Holy Triumph* and *Exultation*, that they thought it improper to *Kneel* in any *Act of Worship* on that *Day*.

The *Lord's Supper* is a *spiritual Feast*; **Eccl. 10. 19.** and a *Feast* (*Solomon* saith) was made for *Laughter*, and so was this for *Holy Joy*; We celebrate the *Memorials* of his

his Death, that we may rejoyce in the Victories that he obtain'd, and the Purchases he made by his Death; and may apply to ourselves the Priviledges and Comforts, which by the Covenant of Grace are made *ours*. There we cannot but be glad, and rejoyce in him, where we remember his Love more than Wine. Cant. 1. 4.

(4.) The Ministry is appointed for the Comfort of the Saints, and their Guides in the Ways of Wisdom are instructed by all Means possible, to make them *Ways of Pleasantness*, and to encourage them to go on pleasantly in those Ways. The Priests of old were ordain'd for Men, Heb. 3. 1, 2, and were therefore, taken from among Men, that they might have Compassion upon the Mourners. And the Prophets had this particularly in their Commission, *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my People*, Isa. 40. 1. *saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.*

Gospel-Ministers in a special manner, are appointed to be the *Helpers of the Joy of the Lord's People*; to be *Barnabuses, Sons of Consolations*; to strengthen the weak Hands, and the feeble Knees, 2 Cor. 1. 24, and to say to them who are of a fearful Heart, *be strong*. The Tabernacles of the Lord of Hosts being amiable, the Care of all that serve in those Tabernacles, must be to make them appear so; that they who compass the Altars of God, may find him God, their exceeding Joy.

Thus hath God taken Care for the Comfort of his People, so that he is not.

to be blam'd if they be not comforted.
But that is not all,

Secondly, There are many particular Benefits and Priviledges which they are entitled to, who walk in the Ways of Religion, that contribute very much to the Pleasantness of those Ways. By the Blood of Christ those Benefits and Priviledges are procur'd for them, which speaks them highly valuable, and by the Covenant of Grace they are secur'd to them, which speaks them unalienable.

1. Those that walk in Wisdom's Ways are discharg'd from the Debts of Sin, and that's pleasant; They are priviledg'd from Arrests, *Who shall lay any thing to their Charge?* while it is God that justifies them, and will stand by his own Act, against Hell and Earth, And He is always near that justifies them; And so is their Advocate that pleads for them, nearer than their Accuser, tho' he stand at their right Hand to resist them, and able to cast him out, and all his Accusations.

Surely, they put a Force upon themselves, that are merry and pleasant under the Guilt of Sin, for if Conscience be awake, it cannot but have a fearful Looking for of Wrath; But if Sin be done away, the Burthen is remov'd, the Wound is heal'd, and all is well; Son, be of good Cheer, tho' sick of a Pally, yet be chearful, for thy Sins are forgiv'n thee; and therefore, not only they shall not hurt thee, but God is reconcil'd to thee, and will do thee good; Thou may'st enjoy the Comforts of this Life, and

Rom. 8. 33.

Isa. 50. 8.

Mat. 9. 2.

and fear no Snare in them; may't bear the Crosses of this Life, and feel no Sting in them; and may't look forward to another Life, without Terror or Amazement.

The Pain which true Penitents have Experience of, in their Reflections upon their Sins, makes the Pleasure and Satisfaction they have in the Assurance of the Pardon of them doubly sweet. As the Sorrow of a Woman in Travail is not an Alloy, but rather a Foil to the Joy, that a Child is born upon it into the World. No Pain more acute than that of broken Bones, to which the Sorrows of a Penitent Sinner are compar'd; but when they are well set, and well knit again, they are not only made easy, but they are made to rejoyce, to which the Comforts of a pardon'd Sinner are compar'd. *Make me to bear Joy and Gladness, that the Bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce.* All our Bones, when kept, that not one of them was broken, must say, *Lord, who is like unto thee?* But there is a more sensible Joy for one displaced Bone reduc'd, than for the Multitude of the Bones that were never hurt; as for one lost Sheep brought home, than for Ninety and nine that went not astray; such is the Pleasure which they have, that know their Sins are pardon'd.

When God's Prophets must speak comfortably to *Jerusalem*, they must tell her that her *Iniquity is pardon'd*. Such a Pleasure there is in the Sense of the Forgiveness of Sins, that it ena-

bles us to make a *light Matter* of Temporal Afflictions, particularly that of Sickneſs, *The Inhabitant ſhall not ſay, I am ſick, for the People that dwell therein ſhall be forgiv'n their Iniquity; And to make a great Matter of Temporal Mercies, when they are thus ſweeten'd and ſecur'd, particularly that of Recovery from Sickneſs; Thou haſt in love to my Soul, cur'd my Body, and deliver'd it from the Pit of Corruption, for thou haſt caſt all my Sins behind thy Back. If our Sins be pardon'd, and we know it, we may go out, and come in in Peace, nothing can come amiſs to us; we may lye down, and riſe up with Pleaſure, for all is clear between us and Heaven; Thus Bleſſed is the Man whoſe Iniquity is forgiv'n.*

2. They have the Spirit of God witnessing with their Spirits, that they are the Children of God; and that's pleaſant. Adoption accompanies Juſtification; And Eph. 1. 5. 7. if we have an Assurance of the Forgiveness of our Sins, according to the Riches of God's Grace, we have an Assurance of this further Comfort, that we were predeſtinated unto the Adoption of Children by Jeſus Chriſt. The ſame Evidence, the ſame Teſtimony that is giv'n of our being pardon'd, ſerves as an Evidence and Teſtimony of our being prefer'd, our being thus prefer'd. Can the Children of Princes and Great Men, pleaſe themſelves with the Thoughts of the Honours and Expectations that attend that Relation? and may not the Children of

of God think with Pleasure of the Adoption they have received, the Spirit of Gal. 3, 6. Adoption, and that Spirit's Witness to their Adoption? And the Pleasure must be the greater, and make the stronger Impression of Joy, when they remember, that they were by Nature not only Strangers and Foreigners, but Children of Wrath, and yet thus highly favour'd.

The Comfort of Relations is none of the least of the Delights of this Life; But what Comfort of Relations comparable to this of being related to God, as our Father; and to Christ, as our Elder Brother; and to all the Saints and Angels too, as belonging to the same Family, which we are happily brought into Relation to. The Pleasure of Claiming and Owning this Relation, is plainly intimated in our being taught to cry, *Abba, Father*; why should it be thus doubled, and in two Languages, but to intimate to us the unaccountable Pleasure and Satisfaction, with which Good Christians call God *Father*; 'Tis the String they harp upon, *Abba, Father*. Rom. 8, 15.

With what Pleasure doth David's own Spirit witness to this, *O my Soul*, Psal. 16. 2.
thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: And it is more to me that God is mine, than if all the World were mine; But when with our Spirits, the Spirit of God witnesseth this too, saying to thy Soul, yea, *He is thy God*, and he owns thee as one of his Family; Witness what he has wrought both in thee, and for thee,
 by

by my Hand; what Joy doth this fill the Soul with, *Joy unspeakable*; especially considering that as the Prophet speaks, *in the Place*, in the same Heart and Conscience, *where it was said* (and by the Spirit too, when he convinc'd as a Spirit of Bondage) *ye are not my People*, even *there it shall be said unto them*, by the Spirit, when he comforts as a Spirit of Adoption, *Ye are the Sons of the living God*.

3. They have an *Access with Boldness to the Throne of Grace*, and that's pleasant. Prayer not only fetcheth in Peace and Pleasure, but it is itself a great Privilege, and not only an Honour, but a Comfort; one of the greatest Comforts of our Lives, that we have a God to go to, at all Times, so that we need not fear coming *unseasonably*, or coming *too often*; and in all Places, tho' as *Jonah in the Fishes Belly*, or as *David in the Depths*, or in the Ends of the Earth.

'Tis a Pleasure to One that's full of Care and Grief to *unbosom himself*, and we are welcome to *pour out our Complaint before God*, and to *shew before him our Trouble*; And to one that wants, or fears wanting, to *petition One that is able*, and willing to supply the Wants. And we have great Encouragement to *make our Requests known to God*; we have an *Access with Confidence*, not an Access with *Difficulty*, as we have to great Men, nor an Access with *Uncertainty of Acceptance*, as the *Ninevites*, Who

can

can tell if God will return to us? But we have an Access with an Assurance, what John 3.25 soever we ask in Faith, according to his Will, we know that we have the Petitions that we desir'd of him.

'Tis a Pleasure to talk to One we love, and that we know loves us, and tho' far above us, yet takes Notice of what we say, and is tenderly concern'd for us; What a Pleasure is it then to speak to God? to have not only a Liberty of Access, but a Liberty of Speech, *Ελευθερία* to utter all our Mind, humbly, and in Faith; Boldness to enter into the Holy-liege by the Blood of Jesus, and not with Fear and Trembling as the High Priest under the Law entered into the Holiest, and Boldness to pour out our Hearts before God, as One tho' he knows our Case, better than we ourselves, yet will give us the Satisfaction of knowing it from us, according to our own showing. Beggars that have good Benefactors live as pleasantly as any other People. 'Tis the Case of God's People; They are Beggars, but they are Beggars to a bountiful Benefactor, that is Rich in Mercy to all that call upon him: Blessed are they that wait daily at the Posts of Wisdom's Doors. If the Prayer of the Upright be God's Delight, it cannot but be theirs.

4. They have a Sanctify'd Use of all their Creature Comforts; and that's pleasant. The Lord knows the Way of the Righteous, and takes Cognizance of all their Concerns; The Steps, yea, and the Stops

Stops too; of a good Man are order'd by the Lord; both his Successes when he goes forwards, and his Disappointments when he goes backwards; He blesteth the Work of their Hands, and his Blessing makes rich, and adds no Sorrow with it; more is imply'd than is express'd, it adds Joy with it, infuseth a Comfort into it.

What God's People have, be it little or much, they have it from the Love of God, and with his Blessing, and then Luke 10, 41. Behold all Things are clean and sweet to them; they come from the Hand of a Father, by the Hand of a Mediator, not in the Channel of common Providence, but by the Golden Pipes of the Promises of the Covenant. Even the

1 Cor. 7, 14. unbelieving Husband, tho' not sanctify'd himself, yet is sanctify'd to the believing Wife; and so is the Comfort of other Relations; for to those who please God every thing is pleasing, or should be so, and is made so by his Favour. And

Psal. 37: 16 hence it is, that a Little that a Righteous Man has, having a Heart to be content with it, and the Divine Skill of Enjoying God in it, is better to him than the Riches of many Wicked were to them;

Prov. 15, 16, and that a Dinner of Herbs where Love is, and the Fear of the Lord, is better, and yields abundantly more Satisfaction, than a Scaled Ox and Hatred and Trouble therewith.

5. They have the Testimony of their own Consciences for them in all Conditions; and that is pleasant. A good Conscience

ence is not only a Brazen Wall, but a Continual Feast; and all the Melody of Solomon's Instruments of Musick of all Sorts, were not to be compar'd with that of the Bird in the Bosom, when it sings sweet. If Paul has a Conscience void of Offence, tho' he be as sorrowful, yet he is always rejoicing; nay, and even when he is pressed above measure, and has ^{2Cor.1.8,12} receiv'd a Sentence of Death within himself, his Rejoicing is this, even the Testimony of his Conscience concerning his Integrity.

As nothing is more painful and unpleasant, than to be smitten and reproach'd by our own Hearts, to have our Consciences fly in our Faces, and give us our own; so there is nothing more comfortable, than to be upon good Grounds reconcil'd to ourselves; to prove our own Work by the Touchstone ^{Gal. 6. 4.} of God's Word, and to find it right, for then have we Rejoicing in ourselves alone, and not in another; For if our ^{1John 3. 21} Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God; may lift up our Face without Spot unto him; and comfortably appeal to his Omniscience; Thou O Lord ^{Jer. 12. 3.} knowest me, thou hast seen me, and try'd my Heart towards thee.

This will not only make us easy under the Censures and Reproaches of Men, as it did Job, *My Heart shall not reproach me, tho' you do*; and Paul, *It is a very small Thing with me to be judged of Man's Judgment*; But it will be a Continual Delight to us, to have our own Hearts say,

say, *Well done.* For the Voice of an enlighten'd, well-inform'd Conscience is the Voice of God; 'Tis his Deputy in the Soul; The Thoughts of the sober Heathen between themselves when they did not accuse, yet the utmost they could do was but to excuse, which is making the best of bad; But they, who have their Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience by the Blood of Christ, are
 Rom. 2. 13; not only excus'd, but encourag'd and commended, for their Praise is not of Men, but of God.
 ἀπολογούμενων.

It is easy to imagine the holy, humble Pleasure that a good Man has, in the just Reflection upon the successful Resistance of a strong and threatening Temptation; the seasonable Suppressing and Crossing of an unruly Appetite or Passion, and a Check given to the Tongue, when it was about to speak unadvisedly. What a Pleasure is it to look back upon any good Word spoken, or any good Work done, in the Strength of God's Grace, to his Glory, and any way to the Advantage of our Brethren, either for Soul or Body. With what a sweet Satisfaction may a good Man lye down in the Close of the Lord's Day, if God has enabled him in some good Measure, to do the Work of the Day in the Day, according as the Duty of the Day requires. We may then eat our Bread with Joy, and drink our Wine with a merry Heart, when we have some good Ground to hope, that God now accepteth our Works through Jesus Christ.

6. They

6. They have the *Earnests and Fore-tastes of Eternal Life and Glory*; and that's pleasant indeed. They have it not only secur'd to them, but dwelling in them, in the First-Fruits of it, such as they are capable of in their present imperfect State. *These Things are written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know, not only that you shall have; but that you have Eternal Life; you are seal'd with that Holy Spirit of Promise, mark'd for God, which is the Earnest of our Inheritance, not only a Ratification of the Grant, but Part of the full Payment.*

1 John 5. 13.

Eph. 1. 13,

14.

Canaan, when we come to it, will be a Land flowing with Milk and Honey; In God's Presence, there is a Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore; But lest we should think it long e're we come to it, the God whom we serve has been pleas'd to send to us, as he did to Israel, some Clusters of the Grapes of that good Land to meet us in the Wilderness; which if they were sent us in Excuse of the full Enjoyment, and we were to be put off with them, that would put a Bitterness into them; But being sent us in Earnest of the full Enjoyment, that puts a Sweetness into them; and makes them pleasant indeed.

A Day in God's Courts, an Hour at his Table in Communion with him, is very pleasant, better than a Thousand Days, than ten thousand Hours, in any of the Enjoyments of Sense; But this very much increaseth the Pleasantness of it.

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that

Heb. 4. 9.

that it is the Pledge of a Blessed Eternity, which we hope to spend *within the Vail*, in the Vision and Fruition of God. Sabbaths are sweet, as they are *Earnests* of the everlasting *Sabbatism*, or *Keeping of a Sabbath* (as the Apostle calls it) which *remains for the People of God*. — Gospel Feasts are, therefore, sweet, because *Earnests* of the everlasting Feast, to which we shall sit down *with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob*. The Joys of the Holy Ghost are sweet, as they are *Earnests* of that *Joy of our Lord*, into which all Christ's good and faithful Servants shall enter. Praising God is sweet, as it is an Earnest of that Blessed State, in which we shall *not rest Day or Night* from Praising God. The Communion of Saints is sweet, as it is an Earnest of the Pleasure we hope to have in the *General Assembly, and Church of the First-born*.

Heb. 12. 23

They that travel Wisdom's Ways, tho' sometimes they find themselves walking in the low, and darksome Valley of the Shadow of Death, where they can see but a little Way before them; yet at other Times, they are led with Moses to the Top of Mount Pisgah, and thence have a pleasant Prospect of the Land of Promise, and the Glories of that good Land, not with such a Damp upon the Pleasure of it as Moses had; Thou shalt see it with thine Eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither; but such an Addition to the Pleasure of it as Abraham had, when God said to him, *All the Land*

Deut. 34. 4.

Gen. 13. 14.

35.

Land which thou see'st, to thee will I give it. Take the Pleasure of the Prospect, as a Pledge of the Possession shortly.

CHAP. IV.

The Doctrine further prov'd by Experience.

HAVING found Religion in its own Nature pleasant, and the Comforts and Priviledges so with which it is attended, we shall next try to make this Truth more evident, by *Appealing* to such as may be thought competent Witnesses in such a Case. I confess, if we appeal to the *Natural Man*, the meer *Animal* (as the Word signifies) that looks no further than the Things of Sense, and judgeth by no other Rule than Sense, and *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God*, for they are *Foolishness to him*; such a One will be so far from *Consenting* to this Truth, and *Concurring* with it, that he will contradict and oppose it; Our Appeal must be to those, that have some *spiritual Senses exercis'd*, for otherwise, *The Brutish Man* *Psal. 92. 6* knows not, *neither doth the Fool understand this.*

We must therefore be allowed to look upon *Convinced Sinners*, and *Comforted Saints*, wicked People whom the Spirit hath rouz'd out of a *Sinful Securiety*, and Godly People whom the Spi-

rit has put to rest in a holy Serenity, are the most competent proper Witnesses to give Evidence in this Case; and and to their Experience we appeal.

First, Ask those that have try'd the Ways of Sin and Wickedness, of Vice and Profaneness, and begin to pause a little, and to consider whether the Way they are in be Right; and let us hear what are their Experiences concerning those Ways; and our Appeal to them, is in the Words of the Apostle,

Rom. 6. 21. *What Fruit had ye then in those Things, whereof ye are now ashamed? Not only what Fruit will ye have at last, when the End of these Things is Death; or as Job, What Pleasure hath he in his House after him, when the number of his Months is cut off in the midst? But what Fruit, what Pleasure had ye then, when you were in the Enjoyment of the best of it.*

Those that have been running to an Excess of Riot, that have laid the Reins in the Neck of their Lusts, have rejoiced with the young Man in his Youth, and walked in the Way of their Hearts, and the Sight of their Eyes, have taken a boundless Liberty in the Gratifications of Sense, and have made it their Business to extract out of this World, whatever may pass under the Name of Pleasure; But when they begin to think (which they could not find in their Hearts to do, while they were going on in their Pursuit,) Ask them now, What they think of those Pleasures,

tures, which pretend to vie with those of Religion? and they will tell you,

1. That the Pleasure of Sin was painful and unsatisfying in the Enjoyment, and which then they had no reason to boast of. It was a sordid Pleasure, and beneath the Dignity of a Man, and which could not be had, but by yielding up the Throne in the Soul, to the inferior Faculties of Sense, and allowing them the Dominion over Reason and Conscience, which ought to command and give Law. It was the gratifying of an Appetite which was the Disease of the Soul, and which would not be satisfy'd, but like the Daughters of the Horse-leech, fill cry, Give, Give,

What poor Pleasure hath the Covetous Man in the Wealth of the World; 'Tis the Lust of the Eye, that is thereby humour'd, for what Good hath the Owner thereof, save the Beholding thereof with his Eyes? And what a poor Satisfaction is that; and yet even that is no Satisfaction neither, for he that loveth Silver, will find, that the more he has, the more he would have, so that he shall not be satisfied with Silver; nay, it fastens upon the Mind a Burthen of Care and Perplexity, so that the abundance of the Rich, will not suffer him to Sleep.

Drunkenness passeth for a pleasant Sin, but it is a brutish Pleasure, for it puts a Force upon the Powers of Nature, disturbs the Exercise of Reason,

and puts Men out of the Possession and Enjoyment of their own Souls; and so far is it from yielding any true Satisfaction, that the gratifying of this base Appetite, is but bringing Oil to a Flame; *When I awake, I will seek it yet again*, is the Language of the Drunkard.

Prov. 23. 35.

Contention and Revenge, pretend to be pleasant Sins too, *Est vindicta bonum vitæ jucundius ipsa*, but it is so far from being so, that it is, of all other Sins, the most Vexatious; It kindles a Fire in the Soul, puts it into a Hurry and Disorder; where they are, there is Confusion and every Evil Work. The Lust, from whence not only Wars and Fightings come, but other Sins are said to war in the Members; they not only war against the Soul, and threaten the Destruction of its true Interests, but they war in the Soul, and give Disturbance to its present Peace; and fill it with continual Alarms.

Jam. 4. 1.

1 Pet. 2. 11.

They that have made themselves Slaves to their Lusts, will own, that it was the greatest Drudgery in the World, and therefore, is represented in the Parable of the Prodigal, by a young Gentleman hiring himself to one that sent him into his Field to feed Swine, where he was made a Fellow-commoner with them, and would fain have fill'd his Belly with the Husks, that they did eat, such a Disgrace, such a Dissatisfaction is there in the Pleasures of Sin; Besides the Diversity of Masters which Sinners are.

Luke 15. 16.

are at the Beck of, and their Disagreement among themselves; for they that are disobedient to that God who is *One*, Tit. 3. 3. are deceiv'd, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, and therein led captive by Satan, their sworn Enemy at his Will.

2. That the Pleasure of Sin was very bitter, and tormenting in the Reflection. We will allow, that there is a Pleasure in Sin for a Season, but that Season is Heb. 11. 25. soon over, and is succeeded by another Season that is the Reverse of it; the Sweetness is soon gone, and leaves the Bitterness behind in the Bottom of the Cup; The Wine is red, and gives its Colour, its Flavour very agreeable, but Prov. 23. 32. at the last it bites like a Serpent, and stings like an Adder; Sin is that Strange Woman, whose Flatteries are charming, but her End bitter as Wormwood. Prov. 5. 3. 4.

When Conscience is awake, and tells the Sinner he is verily guilty, when his Sins are set in Order before him in their true Colour, and he sees himself defil'd and deform'd by them, when his own Wickedness begins to correct him, and his Backslidings to reprove him, and his own Heart makes him loath himself for all his Abominations, where is the Pleasure of his Sin then? As the Thief is ashamed when he is discover'd to the World, so are the Drunkards, the Unclean, when discover'd to themselves; and say, Where shall I cause my Shame to go? there is no Remedy but I must lye down in it. If the Pleasure of any Sin would last, surely that of ill-got Gain would, because

Job 20: 11,
&c.

cause there is something to shew for it;
And yet tho' that Wickedness be sweet
in the Sinner's Mouth, tho' he bide it
under his Tongue, yet in his Bowels 'tis
turn'd into the Gall of Asps; He hath
swallow'd down Riches, but shall be forc'd
to vomit them up again.

Solomon had skim'd the Cream of sensual Delights, and pronounc'd not only Vanity and Vexation concerning them all, even the best, but concerning those of them that were sinful, the forbidden Pleasures into which he was betray'd, that the Reflection upon them fill'd him with Horror and Amazement; I apply'd my Heart, saith he, to know the Wickedness of Folly, even of Foolishness and Madness, so he now calls the Looses he had taken; he cannot speak bad enough of them, for I find more bitter than Death, the Woman whose Heart is Snarcs and Nets, and her Hands as Bands.

Ecccl. 7. 26.

And is such Pleasure as this, worthy to come in Competition with the Pleasures of Religion, or to be nam'd the same Day with them? What sensless Creatures are the sensual, that will not be perswaded to quit the Pleasures of Brutes, when they shall have in Exchange the Delights of Angels.

Secondly, Ask those that have try'd the Ways of Wisdom, what are their Experiences concerning those Ways. Call now if there be any that will answer you, and to which of the Saints will you turn? Turn you to which you will, and they will agree to this, that Wisdom's Ways
are

are Pleasantness, and her Paths Peace. However about some Things they may differ in their Sentiments, in this they are all of a Mind, that God is a good Master, and his Service not only perfect Freedom, but perfect Pleasure.

And it is a Debt, which Aged and Experienced Christians owe both to their Master, and to their Fellow-Servants, both to Christ and Christians, to bear their Testimony to this Truth; and the more explicitly and solemnly they do it the better; Let them tell others, *What God has done for their Souls*; *Psal. 66. 16.* and how they have rested *that he is gracious*; Let them own to the Honour of God and Religion, that there *has not* *1 Kings 8. 56* *fail'd one Word of God's good Promise*; by which he design'd to make his Servants pleasant; that what is said of the Pleasantness of Religion is really so; Let them *set to their Seal that it is true*; Let *1 John 1. 2.* it have their *Probatur est*; we have found it so.

The Ways of Religion and Godliness are the good old Ways; Now if you *Jer. 6. 16.* would have an Account of the Way you have to go, you must enquire of those that have travell'd it; not those who have occasionally slept into it now and then, but those whose Business hath led them to frequent it. Ask the *Ancient Travellers*, whether they have found *Rest to their Souls* in this way, and there are few you shall enquire of, but they will be ready to own these four Things from Experience.

1. That

1. That they have found the *Rules* and *Dictates* of Religion very agreeable both to right Reason, and to their true Interest; and therefore pleasant. They have found the Word nigh them, and accommodated to them, and not at such a mighty Distance as they were made to believe. They have found all God's Precepts concerning all Things to be right, and reasonable, and highly equirable; and when they did but view themselves Men, they could not but consent, and subscribe to the Law, that it was good; and there is a wonderful Decorum in it.

Rom. 7. 16.

The Laws of Humility and Meekness, Sobriety and Temperance, Contentment and Patience, Love and Charity, these are agreeable to ourselves, when we are in our right Mind; They are the Rectitude of our Nature, the Advancement of our Powers and Faculties; the Composure of our Minds, and the Comfort of our Lives, and carry their own Letters of Commendation along with them. If a Man understood himself, and his own Interest, he would comport with these Rules, and govern himself by them, tho' there were no Authority over him to oblige him to it; All that have thoroughly try'd them, will say they are so far from being Chains of Imprisonment to a Man, and as Fetters to his Feet, that they are as Chains of Ornament to him, and as the Girdle to his Loins.

Ask Experienc'd Christians, and they will tell you, what Abundance of Comfort and Satisfaction they have had

in

in *Keeping sober*, when they have been in *Temptation to Excess*; in *doing justly*, when they might have gain'd by *Dishonesty* as others do, and no Body know it; in *Forgiving an Injury*, when it was in the *Power of their Hand to revenge* it; In *giving Alms* to the *Poor*, when perhaps they *frighten'd* themselves by it; in *submitting to an Affliction*, when the *Circumstances of it* were very *aggravating*; And in *Bridling their Passion* under great *Provocations*. With what *Comfort* does *Nehemiab* reflect upon it, that tho' his *Predecessors* in the *Government* had abus'd their *Power*, yet *So did* Neh. 5. 15. *not I* (saith he) *because of the Fear of God*. And with what *Pleasure* doth *Samuel* make his *Appeal*, *Whose One have* 1Sam. 12. 3. *I taken, or whom have I defrauded*; and *Paul* his, *I have coveted no Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel*. If you would have a *Register of Experiences* to this *Purpose*, read the *119th Psalm*, which is a *Collection of David's Testimonies* to the *Sweetness and Goodness of God's Law*; The *Equity and Excellency of it*; and the *abundant Satisfaction* that is to be found in a *constant conscientious Conformity to it*.

2. That they have found the *Exercises of Devotion to be very pleasant and comfortable*, and if there be an *Heaven upon Earth*, it is in *Communion with God* in his *Ordinances*; in *hearing from him*, in *speaking to him*; in *receiving the Tokens of his Favour and Communications of his Grace*, and returning
pious

pious Affections to him; pouring out the Heart before him, lifting up the Soul to him.

All good Christians will subscribe to *David's Experience*, *It is good for me to draw near to God*; the nearer the better; and it will be best of all when I come to be nearest of all within the Vail, and will joyn with him in saying, *Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, to God as to thy Rest, and repose in him.* I have found that Satisfaction in Communion with God, which I would not exchange for all the *Delights of the Sons of Men*, and the *peculiar Treasures of Kings and Provinces*.

What a Pleasure did those pious Jews in *Hezekiah's Time* find, in the Solemnities of the *Passover*, who when they had kept seven Days according to the Law in attending on God's Ordinances, *2Chr. 30. 23.* took Counsel together to keep other seven Days, and they kept other seven Days with Gladness. And if Christ's Hearers had not found an abundant Sweetness and Satisfaction in Attending on him, they would never have continu'd their Attendance three Days in a desert Place, as we find they did. No wonder then, that his own Disciples when they were Spectators of his Transfiguration, and Auditors of his Discourse with *Moses and Elias* in the holy Mount, said, *Master, It is good for us to be here*; Here let us make Tabernacles.

I appeal to all, that know what it is to be inward with God in an Ordinance,

to worship him in the Spirit, whether they have not found abundant Satisfaction in it? They will say with the Spouse, *I sat down under his Shadow with Delight, and his Fruit was sweet unto my Taste*: And with the Noble Marquess of Vico, *Let their Money perish with them, that esteem all the Wealth and Pleasure of this World worth one Hour's Communion with God in Jesus Christ*. They will own, that they never had that true Delight and Satisfaction in any of the Employments, or Enjoyments of this World, which they have had in the Service of God, and in the believing Relishes of that loving Kindness of his, which is better than Life. These have put Gladness into their Hearts, more than the Joy of Harvest, or theirs that divide the Spoil. If in their Preparations for solemn Ordinances they have gone forth weeping, bearing precious Seed, yet they have come again with Rejoicing, bringing their Sheaves with them.

3. That they have found the Pleasure of Religion sufficient to overcome the Pains and Trouble of Sense, and to take out the Sting of them, and take off the Terror of them. This is a plain Evidence of the Excellency of Spiritual Pleasures, that Religious Convictions will soon conquer Sensual Delights, and quite extinguish them. So that they became as Songs to a heavy Heart, for a Wounded Spirit who can bear? But it has often been found, that the Pains of Sense have not been able to extinguish Spiritual Delights,

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but have been conquer'd and quite over-
balanc'd by them. Joy in Spirit has
been to many, a powerful Allay to
Trouble in the Flesh.

The Pleasure that Holy Souls have
in God, as it needs not to be supported
by the Delights of Sense, so it fears not
being suppress'd by the Grievances of
Sense. They can rejoice in the Lord,
Hab. 3. 17,
us. and joy in him as the God of their Sal-
vation, even then, when the Fig-Tree
doth not blossom, and there is no Fruit in
the Vine; for even then, when in the
World they have Tribulation, Christ has
provided that in him they should have
Satisfaction.

For this we may appeal to the Mar-
tyrs, and other Sufferers for the Name
of Christ; How have their spiritual
Joys made their Bonds for Christ easy,
and made their Prisons their Delightable
Orchards, as one of the Martyrs call'd
his. Animated by these Comforts,
they have not only taken patiently, but
Heb. 10. 34. taken joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods,
knowing in themselves that they have in
Heaven a better, and a more enduring Sub-
stance. Ask Paul, and he will tell you,
& Cor. 6. 4, that even then when he was troubled on
every Side, when without were Fightings
and within were Fears, yet he was fill'd
with Comfort; and was exceeding joyful
in all his Tribulations. And that as his
Sufferings for Christ did increase, his
Consolation in Christ increas'd propor-
& Cor. 1. 5. tionably. And tho' he expects no o-
ther but to finish his Course with Blood,

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yet he doubts not but to finish his Course with Joy.

Nay, we may appeal to the Sick-Beds, and Death-Beds of many good Christians for the Proof of this; when wearisom Nights have been appointed to them, yet God's Statutes have been their Psal. 119. 54. Songs, their Songs in the Night. I have Pain said One, but I bless God, I have Peace; weak and dying said another, but *sai Lucis intras*, Light and Comfort enough within. The Delights of Sense forsake us, when we most need them to be a Comfort to us; when a Man is chasten'd with Pain Job 33. 19. upon his Bed, and the Multitude of his 20. Bones with strong Pain, he abhorreth Bread and dainty Meat, and cannot relish it; But then the Bread of Life and spiritual Dainties have the sweetest Relish of all. Many of God's People have found it so; This is my Comfort in mine Psal. 119. 50. Affliction, that thy Word hath quickned me; This has made all their Bed in their Sickness, and made it easy.

The Pleasantness of Wisdom's Ways hath sometimes been remarkably attested by the Joys and Triumphs of dying Christians, in reflecting upon that Divine Grace, which hath carry'd them comfortably through this World, and is then carrying them more comfortably out of it to a better. *What is that Light which I see*, said an Eminent Divine upon his Death-Bed; *It is the Sun-Shine*, said One that was by; No, reply'd he, *It is my Saviour's Shine*; O the Joys, O the Comforts that I feel! Whether in the Body,

or out of the Body, I cannot tell; but I see and feel Things that are unutterable, and full of Glory. O let it be preached at my Funeral, and tell it when I am dead and gone, that God deals familiarly with Man, I am as full of Comfort as my Heart can hold. Mr. Joseph Allein's Life and Mr. John Janeway's have remarkable Instances of this.

4. They have found, that the closer they have kept to Religion's Ways, and the better Progress they have made in those Ways, the more Pleasure they have found in them. By this it appears, that the Pleasure takes its Excellency from the Religion, that the more Religion prevails the greater the Pleasure is. What Disquiet and Discomfort Wisdom's Children have, is owing not to Wisdom's Ways, those are pleasant, but to their Deviations from those Ways, or their Sloathfulness and Trifling in these Ways, those indeed, are unpleasant; and sooner or later will be found so.

If good People are sometimes drooping, and in Sorrow, it is not because they are good, but because they are not so good as they should be; they do not live up to their Profession and Principles, but are too much in Love with the Body, and hanker too much after the World, tho' they do not turn back to Sodom, they look back towards it, and are too mindful of the Country, from which they came out, and this makes them uneasy, this forfeits their Comforts, and grieves their Comforter, and disturbs their Peace,

Heb. 11.15.

Peace, which would have been firm to them, if they had been firm to their Engagements. But if we turn aside out of the Ways of God, we are not to think it strange, if the Consolations of God do not follow us.

But if we cleave to the Lord with full Purpose of Heart, then we find the Joy of the Lord our Strength. Have we not found those Duties most pleasant, in which we have taken most Pain, and most Care; and that we have had the most comfortable Sabbath-Visits made to our Souls, then, when we have been most in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.

Rev. 1. 10.

And the longer we continue, and the more we mend our Pace in these Ways, the more Pleasure we find in them. This is the Excellency of Spiritual Pleasures, and recommends them greatly, that they *increase with Use*, so far are they from withering, or going to Decay; The Difficulties which may at first be found in the Ways of Religion wear off by Degrees, and the Work of it grows more easy, and the Joys of it more sweet.

Ask those that have back-slidden from the Ways of God, have lost their first Love, and begin to bethink themselves, and to remember whence they are fallen, whether they had not a great deal more Comfort when they kept close to God, than they have had since they turn'd aside from him; and they will say with that Adulteress, when she found the Way of her Apostacy hedged

Hof. 2. 7. up with Thorns, I will go, and return to my first Husband, for then it was better with me than now. There is nothing got by departing from God, and nothing lost by being faithful to him.

CHAP. V.

The Doctrine illustrated by the Similitude us'd in the Text, of a Pleasant Way or Journey.

THE Praefise of Religion, is often, in Scripture, spoken of as a *Way*; and our walking in that *Way*; 'Tis the Way of God's Commandments, 'tis a *High-way*, the King's *High-way*, the King of Kings *High-way*; And those that are Religious are *travelling* in that Way. The School-men commonly call Christians in this World *Viatores*, *Travellers*; when they come to Heaven they are *Comprehensores*; They have then *attained*, are at Home; Here they are in their *Journey*, there at their *Journey's End*; Now if Heaven be the *Journey's End*, the *Prize of our High Calling*, and we be sure if we *so run* as we ought, that *we shall obtain that*, it is enough to engage, and encourage us in our Way, tho' it be never so unpleasant; but we are told *ex abundanti*, that we have also *a pleasant Road*.

Now there are *twelve Things*, which help to make a *Journey pleasant*, and there

there is something like to each of them, which may be found in the *Way of Wisdom*, and those who walk in that way.

First, It helps to make a Journey pleasant to go upon a good Errand. He that is brought up a Prisoner in the Hands of the Ministers of Justice, whatever Conveniencies he may be accommodated with, cannot have a pleasant Journey, but a melancholy One; And that's the Case of a wicked Man, He is going on, in this World, towards Destruction, the Way he is in, tho' wide and broad, leads directly to it; and while he persists in it, every Step he takes is so much nearer Hell, and therefore he cannot have a pleasant Journey; 'tis absurd and indecent to pretend to make it so: Tho' the Way may seem right to a Man, yet there can be no true Pleasure in it, while the End thereof is the Ways of Death; and the Steps take hold on Hell.

Prov. 14. 12

Prov. 3. 5.

But he that goes into a far Country to receive for himself a Kingdom, whatever Difficulties may attend his Journey, yet the Errand he goes on is enough to make it pleasant, and on this Errand they go that travel *Wisdom's Ways*; they look for a Kingdom which cannot be moved, and are pressing forwards in the hopes of it. Abraham went out of his own Country, not knowing whither he went: But those that set out and hold on, in the Way of Religion know whether it will bring them; that it leads to Life; Eternal Life; And therefore

Luke 19. 12.

Heb. 11. 8.

Mat. 7. 14.

in

Prov. 12. 28. *in the Way of Righteousness is Life*, because there is such a Life at the End of it.

Good People go upon a good Errand, for they go on God's Errand, as well as on their own; they are serving and glorifying him, contributing something to his Honour, and the Advancement of the Interests of his Kingdom among Men; and this makes it Pleasant; and that which puts so great a Reputation upon the Duties of Religion, as that by them God is served and glorified, cannot but put so much the more Satisfaction into them. With what Pleasure doth Paul appeal to God, as the God whom he serv'd with his Spirit in the Gospel of his Son.

Rom. 1. 9.

Secondly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant, to have Strength and Ability for it. He that is Weak, and Sickly, and Lame, can find no Pleasure in the pleasantest Walks; how should he, when he takes every Step in Pain?

Psal. 19. 5.

But a strong Man rejoiceth to run a Race, while he that's feeble trembles to set one Foot before another. Now this makes the Ways of Religion pleasant; that they who walk in those Ways, are not only cur'd of their natural Weakness, but are fill'd with spiritual Strength. They Travel not in their own might, but in the Greamest of his Strength, who is mighty to save.

Isa. 63. 1.

Were they to proceed in their own Strength, they would have little Pleasure in the Journey, every little Diffi-

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culty would soil them, and they would tire presently ; But they go forth, and go on in the Strength of the Lord God, and upon every Occasion according to his Promise, he renews that Strength to them, and they mount up with Wings like Eagles, they go on with Chearfulness and Alacrity, they run and are not weary, they walk and do not faint. God with his Comforts enlargeth their Hearts, and then they not only go, but run the Way of his Commandments.

That which to the Old Nature is impracticable and unpleasant, and which, therefore, is declin'd, or gone about with Reluctancy, to the New Nature is easy and pleasant ; and this New Nature is given to all the Saints, which puts a New Life and Vigour into them, strengthens them with all Might in the inner Man unto all Diligence in Doing-Work, Patience in Suffering-Work, and Perseverance in both ; and so all is made pleasant. They are strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, and this not only keeps the Spirit willing, even then when the Flesh is weak, but makes even the Lame Man to leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb to sing. I can do all Things through Christ strengthning me.

Thirdly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant to have Day-Light : 'Tis very uncomfortable Travelling in the Night, in the black and dark Night ; He that walketh in Darkness, saith our Saviour, knows not whither he goes, right or wrong, and

and that's uncomfortable; And in another Place, *If a Man walk in the Night, he stumblen, because there is no Light in him*; And this is often spoken of as the miserable Case of wicked People, *They know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in Darkness*; They are in continual Danger, and so much the more, if they be not in continual Fear.

But Wisdom's Children are all Children of the Light, and of the Day; They were Darkness, but are Light in the Lord, and walk as Children of the Light. Truly the Light is sweet, even to one that sits still, but much more so to one that is in a Journey; and doubly sweet to those who set out in the Dark, as we all did, but this great Light is risen upon us, not only to please our Eyes, but to guide our Feet into the Paths of Peace; and then they are, indeed, Paths of Peace when we are guided into them, and guided in them by the Light of the Gospel of Christ. And all that walk in the Light of Gospel-Conduct, cannot fail to walk in the Light of Gospel-Comforts.

And it adds to the Pleasure of having Day-Light in our Travels, if we are in no Danger of Losing it, and of being benighted; and this is the Case of those that walk in the Light of the Lord; for the Sun of Righteousness that is risen upon them, with healing under his Wings, shall no more go down, but shall be their everlasting Light.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant to have a good Guide, whose Knowledge and Faithfulness one can confide in. A Traveller, tho' he has Day-Light, yet may miss his Way, and lose himself, if he have not one to shew him his Way, and go before him, especially if his Way lye, as ours doth, through a Wilderness, where there are so many By-paths; And tho' he should not be guilty of any fatal Mistake, yet he is in continual Doubt and Fear, which makes his Journey uncomfortable.

But this is both the Safety and the Satisfaction of all true Christians, that they have not only the Gospel of Christ for their Light, both a discovering and directing Light, but the Spirit of Christ for their Guide; 'Tis promis'd, that he shall lead them into all Truth, shall guide them with his Eye; Hence they are said to walk after the Spirit, and to be led by the Spirit, as Gods Israel of old were led through the Wilderness by a Pillar of Cloud and Fire, and the Lord was in it.

John 16. 13

Psal. 32. 8.

Rom. 8. 14.

This is that which makes the Way of Religion such a High-way, as that the Way-faring Men tho' Fools shall not err therein; There are Fools indeed, wicked ones, who walk after the Flesh, that miss their Way, and wander endlessly; The Labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them, because he knoweth not how to go to the City; But those Fools that shall not err therein are weak ones, the foolish Things of the World, who in a Sense of

Isa. 35. 8.

Eccl. 10. 15

of their own Folly are so wise, as to give up themselves intirely to the Conduct of the Spirit, both by Conscience and the written Word, and if they have done this in Sincerity, they know whom they have depended upon to guide them by his Counsel, and afterwards to receive them to his Glory. These may go on their Journey pleasantly, who are promis'd, that whenever they are in Doubt, or in Danger of mistaking, or being misled, they shall hear a Voice saying to them, *This is the Way, walk in it.*

Isa. 30. 2.

Fifthly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant, to be under a good Guard, or Convoy, that one may travel safely. Our Way lies through an Enemy's Country, and they are active, subtil Enemies; The Road is infested with Robbers, that lye in wait to spoil, and to destroy; we travel by the *Lyon's Den*, and the *Mountains of the Leopards*; And our Danger is the greater, that it ariseth not from *Flesh and Blood*, but *spiritual Wickednesses*. Satan, by the World and the Flesh, way-lays us, and seeks to devour us; so that we could not with any Pleasure go on our Way, if God himself had not taken us under his special Protection.

1 Pet. 5. 8.

The same Spirit that is a Guide to these Travellers, is their Guard also; for whoever are sanctify'd by the Holy Ghost, are by him preserv'd in Christ Jesus; preserv'd blameless; and shall be preserv'd to the Heavenly Kingdom, so as that they shall not be rob'd of their Graces and

Jude 1,

2 Tim. 4. 18.

and Comforts, which are their Evidences for, and Earnests of Eternal Life; they are kept by the power of God 1 Pet. 1. 5: through Faith unto Salvation, and therefore may go on Chearfully.

The Promises of God, are a *Writ of Protection* to all Christ's good Subjects in their Travels, and give them such a holy Security, as lays a Foundation for a constant Serenity. Eternal Truth itself hath assur'd them, that no Evil *Psal. 91. 10.* thing shall befall them, nothing really and destructively Evil, no Evil but what God will bring Good to them out of; God himself hath engag'd to be their Keeper, and to preserve their going out and coming in, from henceforth and forever, which looks as far forwards as Eternity itself; and by such Promises as these, and that Grace which is convey'd through them to all active Believers, God carries them as upon Eagles *Deut. 32. 11.* Wings to bring them to himself.

Good Angels are appointed for a Guard to all that walk in *Wisdom's Ways*, *Psal. 91. 11.* to bear them in their Arms, where they go, and to pitch their Tents round about *Psal. 34. 7:* them where they rest, and so to keep them in all their Ways; How easy may they be that are thus guarded, and how well pleas'd under all Events, as Jacob was, who went on his Way, and the *Gen. 32. 10* Angels of God met him.

Sixthly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant, to have the Way track'd by those that have gone before in the same Road, and on the same Errand. Untrodden Paths are

unpleasant ones ; But in the Way of Religion, we are both *directed* and *encourag'd* by the good *Examples* of those that have chosen the Way of Truth before us, and have walk'd in it. We are bidden to follow them, who are now
 Heb. 6. 12. *through Faith and Patience* (those travelling Graces of a Christian) *inheriting the Promises.*

'Tis pleasant to think, that we are walking in the same Way with *Abraham* and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, with whom we hope shortly to sit down in the Kingdom of God. How many holy, wise, good Men have govern'd themselves by the same Rules that we govern ourselves by, with the same Views, have liv'd by the same Faith that we live by, looking for the same blessed Hope, and have
 Heb. 11. 2 by it obtain'd a good Report ; And we go
 Cant. 1. 3. forth by the Footsteps of the Flock.

Let us, therefore, to make our Way
 Jam. 5. 10. easy and pleasant, take the Prophets for an Example ; And being compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, that like the Cloud in the Wilderness that went before *Israel*, not only to shew them the Way, but to smooch it for them, let us run with Patience, and Chearfulness, the Race that is set before us, looking unto *Jesus* ; the most encouraging Pattern of all, who has left us an Example, that we
 Heb. 12. 1. should follow his Steps ; and what more pleasant than to follow such a Leader, whose Word of Command is *Follow me !*

Seventhly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant to have good Company ; This de-
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ceives the Time, and takes off the Tediouſneſs of a Journey as much as any Thing, *Amicus pro Vehiculo.* It is the Comfort of thoſe who walk in Wiſdom's Ways, that tho' there are but few walking in thoſe Ways, yet there are ſome, and thoſe the wiſeſt and beſt, and more excellent than their Neighbours; and it will be found there are more ready to ſay, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* Pſal. 122. 12. Zeck. 8. 23.

The Communion of Saints contributes much to the Pleaſantneſs of Wiſdom's Ways; We have many Fellow-Travellers, that quicken one another, by the Fellowship they have one with another, as Companions in the Kingdom and Patience of Jeſus Chriſt: It was a Pleaſure to them, who were going up to Jeruſalem to worſhip, that their Numbers increas'd in every Town they came to, and ſo they went from Strength to Strength, they grew more and more numerous, till every one of them in Zion appear'd before God; and ſo it is with God's ſpiritual Iſrael, to which we have the Pleaſure of ſeeing daily Additions of ſuch as ſhall be ſav'd. Pſa. 84. 7.

They that travel together make one another pleaſant by Familiar Converſe; and it is the Will of God that his People ſhould by that Means encourage one another, and ſtrengthen one another's Hands; They that fear the Lord ſhould ſpeak of ſet one to another, exhort one another daily, and communicate their Experiences, and it will add much to

unpleasant ones ; But in the Way of Religion, we are both *directed* and *encourag'd* by the good *Examples* of those that have chosen the Way of Truth before us, and have walk'd in it. We are bidden to follow them, who are now
Heb. 6. 12. *through Faith and Patience* (those travelling Graces of a Christian) *inheriting the Promises.*

'Tis pleasant to think, that we are *walking* in the same Way with *Abraham* and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, with whom we hope shortly to sit down in the Kingdom of God. How many holy, wise, good Men have govern'd themselves by the same Rules that we govern ourselves by, with the same Views, have liv'd by the same Faith that we live by, looking for the same blessed Hope, and have
Heb. 11. 2 *by it obtain'd a good Report ;* And we go
Caui. 1. 8. *forth by the Footsteps of the Flock.*

Let us, therefore, to make our Way
Jam. 5. 10. *easy and pleasant, take the Prophets for an Example ;* And being compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, that like the Cloud in the Wilderness that went before *Israel*, not only to shew them the Way, but to smooke it for them, let us run with Patience, and Chearfulness, the Race that is set before us, looking unto *Jesus* ; the most encouraging Pattern of all, who has left us an Example, that we
Heb. 12. 1. *should follow his Steps ;* and what more pleasant than to follow such a Leader, whose Word of Command is *Follow me !*

Seventhly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant to have good Company ; This de-
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ceives the Time, and takes off the Tediousness of a Journey as much as any Thing, *Amicus pro Vehiculo.* It is the Comfort of those who walk in Wisdom's Ways, that tho' there are but few walking in those Ways, yet there are some, and those the wisest and best, and more excellent than their Neighbours; and it will be found there are more ready to say, *We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.* Psal. 122. 12. Zech. 8. 23.

The Communion of Saints contributes much to the Pleasantness of Wisdom's Ways; We have many Fellow-Travelers, that quicken one another, by the Fellowship they have one with another, as Companions in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ. It was a Pleasure to them, who were going up to Jerusalem to worship, that their Numbers increas'd in every Town they came to, and so they went from Strength to Strength, they grew more and more numerous, 'till every one of them in Zion appear'd before God; and so it is with God's spiritual Israel, to which we have the Pleasure of seeing daily Additions of such as shall be sav'd. Psal. 84. 7.

They that travel together make one another pleasant by Familiar Converse; and it is the Will of God that his People should by that Means encourage one another, and strengthen one another's Hands; They that fear the Lord should speak often one to another, exhort one another daily, and communicate their Experiences, and it will add much to

the Pleasure of this, to consider the kind Notice God is pleas'd to take of it; *He bearkens, and bears, and a Book of Remembrance is written for those that fear the Lord, and think on his Name.*

Psal. 23. 2.

Eighly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant, to have the Way lye through green Pastures, and by the still Waters, and so the Ways of Wisdom do. David speaks his Experience herein, that he was led into the green Pastures, the Verdure whereof was grateful to the Eye, and by the still Waters, whose soft and gentle Murmurs were Musick to the Ear: And he was not driven through these, but made to lye down in the midst of these Delights, as Israel when they encamp'd at Elin, where there were twelve Wells of Water, and threescore and ten Palm-trees.

Exod. 15. 27.

Gospel Ordinances, in which we deal much in our Way to Heaven, are very agreeable to all the Children of God, as these green Pastures and still Waters; They call the Sabbath a Delight, and Prayer a Delight, and the Word of God a Delight. These are their plea-

Iza. 64. 11.

Psal. 46. 4.

sant things; There is a River of Comfort in Gospel Ordinances, the Streams whereof make glad the City of God, the Holy Place of the Tabernacles of the most High, and along the Banks of this River their Road lies.

Those that turn aside from the Ways of God's Commandments, are upbraided with the Folly of it, as leaving a pleasant Road for an unpleasant one;

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Will a Man, a Traveller be such a Fool as to leave my Fields, which are smooth and even, for a Rock that's rugged and dangerous, or for the snowy Mountains of Lebanon? Shall the running Waters be forsaken for the strange cold Waters; Thus are Men Enemies to themselves, and the Foolishness of Man perverteth his Way.

Jer. 18. 14.
Marg.

Ninthly, It adds to the Pleasure of a Journey to have it fair over Head. Wet and stormy Weather takes off very much of the Pleasure of a Journey; But 'tis pleasant Travelling when the Sky is clear, and the Air calm and serene; and this is the Happiness of them that walk in Wisdom's Ways, that all is clear between them and Heaven; there are no Clouds of Guilt to interpose between them and the Sun of Righteousness, and to intercept his refreshing Beams; no Storms of Wrath gathering that threaten them.

Our Reconciliation to God, and Acceptance with him makes every thing pleasant; How can we be melancholy, if Heaven smile upon us? Being justified by Faith we have Peace with God, and Peace from God, Peace made for us, and Peace spoken to us, and then we rejoice in Tribulation. Those Travellers cannot but rejoice all the Day, who walk in the Light of God's Countenance.

Tenthly, It adds likewise to the Pleasure of a Journey to be furnished with all needful Accommodations for Travelling.

They

They that walk in the Way of God have wherewithal to *bear their Charges*, and 'tis promis'd them that they shall *want no good thing*. If they have not an abundance of the Wealth of this World, which perhaps will but overload a Traveller, and be an *Incumbrance*, rather than any *Furtherance*, yet they have good Bills; having Access by Prayer to the *Throne of Grace* wherever they are, and a Promise that they shall *receive* what they ask; and Access by Faith to the *Covenant of Grace*, which they may *draw upon*, and *draw from* as an inexhaustible Treasury. *Jehovah Jireh, The Lord will provide.*

Christ our *Melchizedec* brings forth
 Gen. 14. 18. *Bread and Wine* for the Refreshment of the poor Travellers, that they may not
 1 King 19. 8. *faint by the Way*. When *Elijah* had a long Journey to go, he was *virtually* accordingly; God will give *Grace sufficient* to his People for all their Exercises; *Strength according to the Day*; *verily they shall be fed*. And since Travellers must have *baizing-places*, and
 2 Cor. 12. 9. *resting-places*, Christ has provided *Rest at Noon*, in the Heat of the Day, for those that are his; and *Rest at Night* too; *Return to thy Rest, O my Soul*.

Eleventhly, It adds something to the Pleasure of a Journey to *Sing in the Way*; This takes off something of the Fatigue of Travelling, exhilarates the Spirits; Pilgrims us'd it; and God
 Psal. 40. 3. *has put a Song, a new Song into the Mouths of his People, even Praises to their*

their God, and Comfort to themselves. He hath given us Cause to be chearful, and Leave to be chearful, and Hearts to be chearful, and has made it our Duty to *rejoyce in the Lord always.*

It is promis'd to those, who are brought to praise God, by bearing the Words of his Mouth, that they shall sing in the Ways of the Lord; And good Reason, for great is the Glory of the Lord. How pleasantly did the released Captives return to their own Countrey, when they came with Singing unto Zion? *Ha. 51. 11.* And much more Jehoshaphat's Victorious Army, when they came to Jerusalem, *2Chr. 20. 28.* with Psalteries and Harps to the House of the Lord; for the Lord had made them to rejoyce over their Enemies. With this the Travellers may revive one another, *Come, let us sing unto the Lord.*

Twelfthly, It helps to make a Journey pleasant to have a good Prospect. The Travellers in Wisdom's Ways may look about them with Pleasure, so as no Travellers ever could, for they can call all about them *their own*, even the World, and Life, and Death, and Things present, and Things to come in this State, *all is yours, if you be Christ's.* The whole Creation is not only at Peace with them, but at their Service. *1 Cor. 3. 22.*

They can look before them with Pleasure; not with Anxiety and Uncertainty, but a humble Assurance; not with Terror, but Joy. 'Tis pleasant in a Journey, to have a Prospect of the Journey's End; to see that the Way we are

are in leads directly to it; and to see that it cannot be far off; Every Step we take is so much nearer it, nay, and we are within a few Steps of it; We have a Prospect of being shortly with Christ in Paradise; yet a little While, and we shall be at Home, we shall be at Rest; and whatever Difficulties we may meet with in our Way, when we come to Heaven *All will be well, Eternally well.*

CHAP. VI.

The Doctrine vindicated from what may be objected against it.

Job 36. 2.

Suffer me a little (saith Elihu to Job) and I will shew thee that I have yet to speak on God's Behalf, something more to say in Defence of this Truth, against that, which may seem to weaken the Force of it. We all ought to concern ourselves for the *Vindication of Godliness*, and to speak what we can for it, for we know that it is every where spoken against: And there is no Truth so plain, so evident, but there have been those that have objected against it; The Prince of Darkness will raise what Mists he can to cloud a Truth, that stands so directly against his Interest, but *Great is the Truth, and will prevail.*

Now as to the Truth of the Pleasantsness of Religion,

First,

First, It is easy to confront the Reproaches of the Enemies of Religion, that put it into an ill Name. There are those who make it their Business, having perverted their own Ways, to pervert the right Ways of the Lord, and cast an Odium upon them; as Elymas the Sorcerer did, with Design to turn away the Deputy from the Faith. They are like the wicked Spies, that brought up an evil Report upon the promised Land, as a Land that did eat up the Inhabitants thereof; and neither could be conquer'd, nor was worth conquering.

The Scoffers of the later Days speak ill of Religion, as a Task and a Drudgery; they dress it up in frightful, formidable Colours, but very false Ones, to deter others from Piety, and to justify themselves in their own Impiety. They suggest that Christ's Yoke is heavy, and his Commandments grievous; and that to be Religious is to bid Adieu to all Pleasure and Delight, and to turn Tormentors to ourselves; That God is a hard Master, reaping where he has not sown, and gathering where he has not sown.

There were those of Old that thus reproach'd the Ways of God and slander'd Religion, for they said, It is vain to serve God, there's neither Credit nor Comfort in it, and what Profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances, and (observe their invidious Description of Religion) that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts; as if to be Religious was to walk mournfully, whereas indeed it is to walk chearfully.

Now

Now in Answer to these Calumnies we have this to say, That the Matter is not so. They who say thus of Religion, *2 Pet. 2. 12.* *2 Pet. 2. 12.* *Jude 10.* *Gen. 3. 5.* *speake Evil of the Things which they know not; while what they know naturally as brute Beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.* The Devil we know was a Liar from the Beginning, and a false Accuser of God and Religion, and in this particularly represented God to our first Parents, as having dealt hardly and unjustly with them, in tying them out from the Tree of Knowledge; as if he envy'd them the Happiness and Pleasure they would attain to by eating of that Tree; And the same Method he still takes to alienate Mens Minds from the Life of God, and the Power of Godliness. But we know, and are sure, that it is a groundless Imputation, for Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.

Secondly, It is easy also to set aside the Misrepresentations of Religion, which are made by some that call themselves its Friends, and profess Kindness for it. As there are *2 Sam. 12. 14* Enemies of the Lord that blaspheme; so there are among the People of the Lord those that give them great Occasion to do so, as David did. How many Wounds doth Religion receive in the House of her Friends, false Friends they are, or foolish Ones, unworthy to be called Wisdom's Children, for they do not justify her as they ought; but through Mistake and Indulgence of their own Weak-

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Weaknesses betray her Cause instead of pleading it, and witnessing to it; and confirm People's Prejudices against it, which they should endeavour to remove.

Some that profess Religion are *mo-rose* and *sour* in their Profession, peevish and ill-humour'd, and make the Exercises of Religion a Burthen, and Task, and Terror to themselves, and all about them, which ought to *sweeten* the Spirit, and make it easy and candid, and compassionate to the Infirmities of the weak, and feeble of the Flock.

Others are *melancholy* and sorrowful in their Profession, and go *mourning* from Day to Day under prevailing Doubts, and Fears, and Disquietments about their spiritual State. We know some of the best of God's Servants have experienc'd *Trouble of Mind* to a great Degree.

But as to the former it is their *Sin*; and let them bear their own Burthen, but let not Religion be blam'd for it; And as to the latter; tho' there are some very good People that are of a *sorrowful* Spirit, yet we will abide by it, that *true Piety* has *true Pleasure* in it notwithstanding.

But, (1.) God is sometimes pleas'd for wise, and holy Ends, for a Time, to *suspend* the Communication of his Comforts to his People, and to *bide his Face* from them; to *try their Faith*, that it may be found to praise, and honour, and glory at the *Appearing of Christ*, and so much the more for their being a while in *Heaviness* 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7.

ness thro' manifold Temptations. Thus he corrects them for what has been done amiss by them, and takes this Course to mortify what is amiss in them; even Winter Seasons contribute to the Fruitfulness of the Earth. Thus he brings them to a closer, and more humble Dependence upon Christ for all their Comfort, and teacheth them to live entirely upon him. And tho' for a small Moment he thus forsakes them, it is but to magnify his Power so much the more in supporting them, and to make his Returns the sweeter, for he will gather them with everlasting loving Kindness. Light is sown for them, and it will come up again.

(2) This as it is their Affliction, God's Hand must be acknowledg'd in it, his righteous Hand, yet there is Sin in it, and that is from themselves. Good People have not the Comforts they might have in their Religion, and whose Fault is it? They may thank themselves; They run themselves into the Dark, and then shut their Eyes against the Light. *My Wounds stink and are corrupt,* saith David, The Wounds of Sin which I gave myself are unheal'd, not bound up, or mollified with Ointment, And why? Is it for want of Balm in Gilead, or a Physician there? No, he owns 'tis because of my Foolishness, I did not take the right Method with them. God speaks Joy and Gladness to them, but they turn a deaf Ear to it, like Israel in Egypt, that hearken'd not

to Moses for Anguish of Spirit, and Sore Bondage; But let not the Blame be laid upon Religion, which has provided Comfort for their Souls, but let them bear the Blame whole Souls refuse to be Comforted; or, who do not take the Way appointed for Comfort; who do not go through with their Repenting and Believing. David owns the Reason why he wanted Comfort, and was in Pain, and in a Toss, was because he kept Silence. He was not so free with God as he might, and shou'd have been: but when he said, I will confess my Transgression unto the Lord, he was forgiven, and all was well.

Exod. 6. 9.

Psa. 32. 3.
4, 5.

Those do both God and Christ, and themselves, and others, a deal of Wrong, who look upon him with whom they have to do in Religion, as One that seeks an occasion against them, and counts them for his Enemies, and is extreme to mark what they think or say, or do amiss; whereas he is quite otherwise, is slow to Anger, swift to shew Mercy, and willing to make the best of those whose Hearts are upright with Him, though they are compass'd about with Infir- mity; He will not always chide; He doth not delight in the Death of them that dye, but would rather they should turn and live: Nor doth he Delight in the Tears of them that Weep, doth not Afflict willingly, nor Grieve the Children of Men, much less his own Children, but would rather they should be upon good Grounds comforted. Religion

Ezek. 33. 11.

Lam. 3. 33.

M then

then clears itself from all Blame, which some may take Occasion to cast upon it, from the uncomfortable Lives which some lead that are Religious.

But, *Thirdly*, It will require some more Pains to Reconcile this Truth of the Pleasantness of Religious Ways, with that which the Word of God it self tells us of, the Difficulties which the Ways of Religion are attended with. We value not the Misapprehensions of some, and the Misrepresentations of Others, concerning Religious Ways; but we are sure the Word of God is of a Piece with itself; and doth not contradict itself; our Masters hath Taught us to call the Way to Heaven, a narrow Way, *Gods reſtriction*, an Afflicted Way, a Distressed Way, and we have in Scripture many Things that speak it so. And it is true; But that doth not contradict this Doctrine, that the Ways of Wisdom are Pleasant; For the Pleasantness that is in Wisdom's Ways is intended to be a Balance, and it is very much an Over-balance to that in them which is any Way Distasteful or Inconvenient. As for the Imaginary Difficulties which the Sluggard Dreams of, a Lion in the Way, a Lion in the Street, we do not regard them, but there are some real Difficulties in it, as well as real Comforts; for God hath set the one over against the other, that we might study to compare with both, and might Sing, and Sing unto God of both.

Ecc. 7. 14.

Ps. 101. 1.

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We Will not, we Dare not make the Matter better than it is, but will allow there is that in Religion, which at first View may seem Unpleasant. And yet doubt not but to shew that it is Reconcilable to, and Consistent with all that Pleasure, which we maintain to be in Religion, and so to take off all Exceptions against this Doctrine. *Amica Scripturarum lites, utinam Senonstra!* 'Twere well if we could agree with one another, as well as Scripture doth with itself. There are four Things which seem not well to consist with this Doctrine, and yet 'tis certain they do.

First, It is true, that to be Religious, is to live a Life of Repentance, and yet Religious Ways are Pleasant notwithstanding. It is true we must Mourn for Sin Daily, and Reflect with Regret upon our manifold Infirmities; Sin must be bitter to us, and we must even loath and abhor ourselves for our Corruptions, that dwell in us, and the many actual Transgressions that are committed by us. We must renew our Repentance Daily, and every Night must make some sorrowful Reflections upon the Transgressions of the Day. But then,

1. It is not our Walking in the Way of Wisdom, that creates us this Sorrow, but our Trifling in that Way, and our turning aside out of it; if we would keep close to these Ways, and pass forwards in them as we ought, there would

be no Occasion for Repentance. If we were as we should be, we should be always praising God, and rejoicing in him; but we *make other Work* for ourselves, by our own Folly, and then complain that Religion is *unpleasant*, and whose Fault is that? If we would be always *loving*, and *delighting* in God, and would live a Life of Communion with him, we should have no Occasion to repent of *that*; But if we leave the *Fountain of living Waters*, and turn aside to *broken Cisterns*, or the *Brooks in Summer*, and see Cause (as doubtless we shall) to repent of *that*, we may thank ourselves.

What there is of *Bitterness* in Repentance, is owing not to our Religion, but to our Defects and Defaults in Religion; And it proves not that there is Bitterness in the *Ways of God*, but in the *Ways of Sin*, which make a penitential Sorrow necessary for the Preventing of a Sorrow a thousand Times worse; for sooner or later *Sin will have Sorrow*. If Repentance be bitter, we must say, not this comes of being *godly*, but this comes of being *sinful*; *This is thy Wickedness because it is bitter*. If by Sin we have made Sorrow necessary, 'tis certainly better to mourn now, than mourn at the last. To continue *impenitent*, is not to put away Sorrow from thy Heart, but to put it off to a worse Place.

2. Even in Repentance, if it be right, there is a true Pleasure; a Pleasure *ac-*
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Jer. 4. 18.

Prov. 5. 11.

Ecc. 11. ult.

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companying it. Our Saviour hath said of them who thus mourn, not only that they shall be comforted, but that they are blessed. *Mat. 5. 4.* When a Man is conscious to himself, that he has done an ill Thing, and what is unbecoming him, and may be hurtful to him, 'tis incident to him to repent of it; Now Religion hath found a Way to put a Sweetness into that Bitterness. Repentance, when it is from under the Influence of Religion, is nothing but Bitterness and Horror, as Judas's was; But Repentance, as it is made an Act of Religion, as it is one of the Laws of Christ, is pleasant, as it is the Raising of the Spirit, and the Discharging of that which is noxious and offensive. *Mat. 27. 32.*

Our Religion has not only taken Care, that Penitents be not overwhelmed with an Excess of Sorrow, and swallow'd up by it, that their Sorrow do not work Death, as the Sorrow of the World doth; But it has provided, that even this bitter Cup should be sweeten'd; And therefore, we find that under the Law, the Sacrifices for Sin were commonly attended with Expressions of Joy; And while the Priests were sprinkling the Blood of the Sacrifices to make Atonement, the Levites attended with Psalteries and Harps, for so was the Commandment of the Lord by his Prophets. Even the Day to afflict the Soul is the Day of Atonement, And when we receive the Atonement, we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ; In giving Consent to *Rom. 5. 2.* the

the Atonement, we take the Comfort of the Atonement.

In Sorrowing for the Death of some dear Friend or Relation, thus far we have found a Pleasure in it, that it hath given Vent to our Grief which our Spirits were full of; so in Sorrow for Sin, the Shedding of just Tears is some Satisfaction to us; if 'tis a Pleasure to be angry, when a Man thinks with *Jonah*, he doth well to be angry, much more is it a Pleasure to be sorry, when a Man is sure he doth well to be sorry. The same Word in Hebrew signifies both *consolari* and *panitere*, both to comfort and to repent, because there is Comfort in true Repentance.

3. Much more after Repentance, there is a Pleasure attending it, and flowing from it. It is a Way of Pleasantness, for it is the Way to Pleasantness. To them that mourn in Zion, that sorrow after a godly Sort, God hath appointed Beauty for Ashes, and the Oil of Joy for Mourning. And the more the Soul is humbled under the Sense of Sin, the more sensible will the Comfort of Pardon be; 'Tis wounding in Order to being heal'd; The Jubilee Trumpet sounded in the Close of the Day of Soul-Affliction, which proclaim'd the Acceptable Year of the Lord; the Year of Release: And an Acceptable Year it is, indeed, to those, who find themselves ty'd, and bound with the Cords of their Sins.

True Penitents go Weeping, 'tis true, but it is to seek the Lord of Hosts, to seek him as their God, and to enter in-
to Covenant with him; And let their Hearts rejoice that seek the Lord, for they shall find him, and find him their bountiful Rewarder. They Sorrow not as those that have no Hope, but good Hope that their Iniquities are forgiven, and what Joy can be greater than that of a Pardon to one Condemn'd?

Secondly, It is true, That to be Religious is to take Care, and take Pains, and to labor earnestly, and yet Wisdom's Ways are Ways of Pleasurings. It is true, we must strive to enter into this Way, must be in an Agony, so the Word is. There is a Violence which the Kingdom of Heaven suffers, and the Violent take it by Force; And when we are in that Way, we must run with Patience. The Bread of Life is to be eaten in the Sweat of our Face; we must be always upon our Guard, and keep our Hearts with all Diligence; Business for God and our Souls is what we are not allow'd to be Slothful in, but fervent in Spirit serving the Lord. We are Soldiers of Jesus Christ, and we must endure Hardness, must War the good Warfare till it be accomplished.

And yet even in this Contention, there is Comfort; 'Tis Work indeed, and Work that requires Care, and yet it will appear to be pleasant Work, if we consider how we are enabled for it, and encourag'd in it.

E. Howe

1. How we are enabled for it; and strengthen'd with Strength in our Souls to go on in it, and go through with it. It would be unpleasant, and would go on very heavily, if we were left to our selves, to Travel in our own Strength; but if we be acted and animated in it by a better Spirit, and mightier Power than our own, 'tis pleasant. If God
 Phil. 2. 12, 13. *Work in us both to Will and to Do of his own good Pleasure, we shall have no Reason to complain of the Difficulty of our Work, for God ordains Peace for us, true Peace and Pleasure by Working all our Works in us.*

We may Sing at our Work, if our Minds be by the Spirit of God brought to it, our Hands strengthen'd for it, and our Infirmities help'd; and particularly our Infirmities in Prayer; that by it we may fetch in Strength for every Service, Strength according to the Day. Daniel at first found God's Speaking to him a Terror, he could not bear it, but when one like the Appearance of a Man came and touch'd him, (who could be no other but Christ the Mediator) and put Strength into him, saying, *Peace be unto thee, be Strong, yea, be Strong*, it was quite another thing with him, then nothing more Pleasant, *Let my Lord speak, for thou hast Strengthen'd me.*

Tho' the Way to Heaven be up Hill, yet if we be carried on in it as upon Eagles Wings, it will be Pleasant; and those are so that wait upon the Lord, for to them it is promis'd that they shall

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shall renew their Strength. That is pleasant Work, tho' against the Grain to our Corrupt Natures, for the doing of which we have not only a new Nature given us, inclining us to it, and making us habitually Capable of Application to it, but actual Supplies of Grace sufficient for the doing of it, promis'd us by one who knows what Strength we need, and what will serve, and will neither be Unkind to us, nor Unfaithful to his own Word; And it is observable that when God, tho' he eas'd not Paul of the Thorn in the Flesh, yet said that good Word to him, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*, immediately it follows, *Therefore I take Pleasure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am Weak, then am I Strong.*—Sufficient Grace will make our Work Pleasant, even the hardest part of it.

2. How we are encouraged in it. 'Tis true, we must take Pains, but the Work is good Work, and is to be done, and is done by all the Saints from a Principle of Holy Love, and that makes it pleasant; as Jacob's Service for Rachel was to him, because he lov'd her. 'Tis an unspeakable Comfort to industrious Christians, that they are Working together with God, and he with them; that their Master's Eye is upon them, and a Witness to their Sincerity; He sees in Secret, and will Reward openly; God now accepteth their Works, smiles upon them, and his Spirit speaks to them
good

Zech. 7. 13. *good Words, and comfortable Words, with-
nesseth to their Adoption; and this is
very Encouraging to God's Servants;*
as it was to the Servants of Balaam, to
have their Master come to them; when
they were hard at work, reaping down
his own Fields, and with a pleasing
Countenance say to them, *The Lord is
with you; Nay, the Spirit saith more
to God's Labourers, The Lord is with
you.*

Ruth 2. 4. *The Prospect of the Reward of Re-
ward, is in a special Manner encouraging
to us in our Work, and makes it plea-
sant, and the little Difficulties we meet
with in it to be as nothing.* It was by
having an Eye to this, that Moses was
encouraged not only to bear the Reproach
of Christ, but to esteem it greater Riches
than the Treasures of Egypt. In all La-
bour there is Profit, and if so, there is
Pleasure also in the Prospect of that Pro-
fit, and according to the Degree of it.

Heb. 11. 26. *We must work, but it is to work out
our Salvation, a great Salvation, which
when it cometh, will abundantly make
us amends for all our Toil. We must
strive, but it is to enter into Life, Eter-
nal Life. We must run, but it is for
an incorruptible Crown, the Prize of our
High Calling. And we do not run at an
Uncertainty, nor fight as those that beat the
Air, for to him that sows Righteousness
there is a sure Reward, and the Assur-
ance of that Harvest will make, even
the Seedness pleasant.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It is true, That to be Religious, is to deny ourselves in many Things that are pleasing to Sense; And yet Wisdom's Ways are Pleasures for all that. It is, indeed, necessary, that beloved Lusts should be mortify'd, and subdu'd, corrupt Appetites cross'd and displeas'd, which, to the Natural Man, is like *Plucking out a right Eye, and Cutting off a right Hand*; There are forbidden Pleasures that must be abandon'd, and kept at a Distance from; The Flesh must not be gratify'd, nor Provision made to fulfill the Lusts of it: But on the contrary, we must keep under the Body, and bring it into Subjection; we must crucify the Flesh, must kill it, and put it into a painful Death; The first Lesson we are to learn in the School of Christ is to deny ourselves, and this must be our constant Practice; we must use ourselves to deny ourselves, and thus take up our Cross daily.

Mat. 5. 29;

Rom. 13. 14.

1 Cor. 9. 27,

Mat. 16. 24.

Now will not this spoil all the Pleasure of a Religious Life? No, it will not; for the Pleasures of Sense which we are to deny ourselves in, are comparatively despicable, and really dangerous.

These Pleasures we are to deny ourselves in, are comparatively despicable. How much soever they are valued and esteem'd, by those who live by Sense, and know no better, they are look'd upon with a generous Contempt, by those who live by Faith, and are acquainted with Divine and Spiritual Pleasures.

And

And it is no Pain to deny ourselves in these Pleasures, when we know ourselves entitl'd to *better*, more rational, and noble, and agreeable, the Delights of the Blessed Spirits above.

The *Garlick* and *Onions* of Egypt were doted upon by those, that knew not how to value either the *Manna* of the Wilderness, or the Milk and Honey of *Canaan*, so the base and sordid Pleasures of Sense are relish'd by the deprav'd and vicious Appetites of the Carnal Mind; But when a Man has learn'd to put a due Estimate upon Spiritual Pleasures, those that are *sensual* have lost all their Sweetness, and are become the most *insipid* Things in the World; have no Pleasure in them in Comparison with that far greater Pleasure which *excellerth*.

Is it any Diminution to the Pleasure of a grown Man, to deny himself the Toys and Sports which he was fond of when he was a Child; No, when he became a Man he put away those *childish Things*; he is now *past* them, he's *abov* them, for he is acquainted with those Entertainments that are manly, and more generous: Thus mean and little, do the Pleasures of Sense appear to those, that have learn'd to delight themselves in the Lord.

They are really dangerous; They are apt to take away the Heart, if the Heart be set upon them, they blind the Mind, debauch the Understanding and Conscience, and in many quench the

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the Sparks of Conviction, and of that Holy Fire which comes from Heaven, and tends to Heaven. They are in Danger of Drawing away the Heart from God, and the more they are valued and coveted, the more dangerous they are, of piercing us through with many Sorrows, and of drowning us in Destruction and Perdition; To deny ourselves in them, is but to avoid a Rock, upon which Multitudes have fatally split themselves.

What Diminution is it to the Pleasure of a safe and happy Way on sure Ground, which will certainly bring us to our Journey's End, to deny ourselves the false and pretended Satisfaction, of walking in a fair, but dangerous Way, that leads to Destruction? Is it not much pleasanter Travelling on a rough Pavement, than on a smooth Quick-sand? Where there is a known Peril there can be no true Pleasure, and therefore, the Want of it is no Loss, or Uneasiness.

What Pleasure can a wise or considerate Man take in those Entertainments, in which he has continual Reason to suspect a Snare, and a Design upon him, any more than he that was at a Feast could relish the Dainties of it, when he was aware of a naked Sword hanging directly over him by a single Thread. The Foolish Woman, indeed, calls the Stolen Waters sweet, and Bread Prov. 9. 17, eaten in Secret pleasant; But those find 18. no Difficulty, or Uneasiness in deny-

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ing them, who know that the Dead are there, and her Guests are already in the Depths of Hell. Therefore, however the corrupt Heart may find some Reluctancy, in refusing those forbidden Pleasures, we may say of it as *Abigail* did, of *David's* denying himself the Satisfaction of being reveng'd on *Nabal*; Afterwards this shall be no Grief unto us, nor Offence of Heart.

Acts 14. 23. Fourthly, It is true, that Through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God; That we must not only deny ourselves the Pleasures of Sense, but must sometimes expose ourselves to its Pains; we must take up our Cross when it lies in our Way, and bear it after Christ; We are told, that All that will live Godly in Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution, at least, they must expect it, and get ready for it; Bonds and Afflictions abide them, Losses in their Estates, Balks in their Preferment, Reproaches and Contempts, Banishments, Deaths must be counted upon; And will not this spoil the Pleasure of Religion? No, it will not; For,

2 Cor. 4. 37. 1. It is but light Affliction, at the worst, that we are call'd out to suffer, and but for a Moment, compar'd with the far more Exceeding, and Eternal Weight of Glory that is reserv'd for us; *Rom. 8. 18.* with which the Sufferings of this present Time are not worthy to be compar'd. All these Trouble do but touch the Body, the Outward Man, and the Interests of that, they do not at all affect the Soul; they

they break the *Shell*, or pluck off the *Husk*, but do not bruise the *Kernel*.

Can the Brave and Courageous Soldier take Pleasure in the Toils and Perils of the Camp, and in Jeoparding his Life in the High Places of the Field, in the eager Pursuit of Honour, and in the Service of his Prince and Country; And shall not those who have the Interests of Christ's Kingdom near their Hearts, and are carry'd on by a holy Ambition of the Honour that comes from God, take a Delight in Suffering for Christ, when they know that those Sufferings tend to his Honour, and *their own* hereafter? They that are persecuted for Righteousness sake, *Mat. 5. 11.* that are revil'd, and have all Manner *12.* of Evil said against them falsely, because they belong to Christ, are bidden not only to bear it patiently, but to rejoice in it, and to be exceeding glad, for great is their Reward in Heaven. Every Reproach we endure for Christ will be a Pearl in our Crown shortly.

2. As those Afflictions abound for *2 Cor. 1. 4. 5.* Christ, so our Consolations in Christ do much more abound. The more the Waters increas'd, the higher was the Ark lifted up; The more we suffer in God's Cause, the more we partake of his Comforts, for he will not be wanting to those, whom he calls out to any Hardships more than ordinary for his Name's sake. The Lord was with Joseph in the Prison, when he lay there for a good Conscience; And those went from

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Sam. 25. 31.

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2. As those Afflictions abound for 2 Cor. 1. 4. 5. Christ, so our Consolations in Christ do much more abound. The more the Waters increas'd, the higher was the Ark lifted up; The more we suffer in God's Cause, the more we partake of his Comforts, for he will not be wanting to those, whom he calls out to any Hardships more than ordinary for his Name's sake. The Lord was with Joseph in the Prison, when he lay there for a good Conscience; And those went

Aas. 5. 41. from the Council *rejoycing*, that were counted worthy to suffer Shame for Christ's Name; were honour'd to be dishonour'd for him.

Thus the Extraordinary Supports and Joys which they experience, that patiently suffer for Righteousness sake, add much more to the Pleasantness of the Ways of Wisdom, than the Sufferings themselves do, or can, deroga from it; for the Sufferings are humane, the Consolations are divine. They suffer in the Flesh, but they rejoyce in the Spirit. They suffer for a time, but they rejoyce evermore, and this their Joy no Man taketh from them.

CHAP. VII.

The Application of the Doctrine.

CONCERNING this Doctrine of the Pleasuriness of Religious Ways, I hope we may now say as Eliphaz doth of his Principle, *Lo this, we have searched it, so it is;* 'tis uncontestably true, and therefore, we may conclude as he doth, *Hear it, and know thou it is for thy Good; Know thou it for thyself;* so the Margin reads it; Apply it to thyself, Believe it concerning thyself, not only that it is good, but that it is good for me to draw near to God; and then only we hear Things, and know them for our Good, when

Job 5. 27.

Psal. 73. 28.

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when we hear them, and know them for ourselves.

Three Inferences by way of Counsel and Exhortation, we shall draw from this Doctrine.

First, Let us all then be persuaded, and prevail'd with to enter into, and to walk in these Paths of Wisdom, that are so very pleasant: This is what I principally intend in Opening and Proving this Truth; Most People would rather be courted, than threaten'd to their Duty. Much might be said to frighten you out of the Ways of Sin and Folly, but I would hope to gain the same Point another Way, by Alluring you into the Ways of Wisdom and Holiness. This comes to invite you to a Feast, which the Lord of Hosts hath, in the Gospel, made to all Nations, and to all in the Nations, and to you among the rest, for none are excluded, that do not by their Unbelief exclude themselves, a Feast of fat Things full of Marrow, of Wines on the Lees well refined; Delights for Souls infinitely transcending the Delicacies of Sense; you are welcome to this Feast; Come for all Things are now ready; Come eat of Wisdom's Bread, and drink of the Wine that she has mingled. Isa. 25. 6. 8. Prov 9. 1-5.

Is a Life of Religion such a sweet and comfortable Life, why then should not we be Religious? If such as these be the Ways of Wisdom, why should not we be Travellers in those Ways? Let this recommend to us a Life of sincere and serious Godliness, and engage us to

conform to all its Rules, and give up ourselves to be rul'd by them. It is not enough to have a good *Opinion* of Religion, and to give it a good *Word*, that will but be a Witness against us, if we do not set ourselves in good Earnest to the *Practise* of it, and make Conscience of *living up* to it.

I would here with a *particular* and *pressing* Importunity, address myself to you that are *young*; to persuade you, now in the Days of your Youth, now in the present Day, to make Religion your *Choice* and your *Business*; and I assure you if you do so, you will find it your *Delight*. God by his Grace convince you, of the real Comforts that are to be had in real Godliness, that you may be drawn cheerfully to Christ with these *Cords of a Man*, and held fast to him with these *Bands of Love*. My Son (saith Solomon to his little Scholar) eat thou Honey because it is good, and the Honey Comb which is sweet to thy Taste; He doth not forbid him the Delights of Sense, he may use them soberly and moderately, and with due Caution; But remember that, *So shall the Knowledge of Wisdom be to thy Soul, when thou hast found it*; Thou hast better Pleasures than these to mind and pursue, spiritual and rational Ones; and instead of being made indifferent to those, we should rather be led to them, and quicken'd in our Desires after them by these Delights of Sense, which God gives us to engage us to himself, and his Service.

Prov. 24. 13,
14.

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The Age of Youth is the Age of Pleasure, you think you may now be allow'd to take your Pleasure; O that you would take it, and seek it there where alone it is to be had, and that is in a strict Observance of the Laws of Virtue and Godliness. Would you live a pleasant Life, begin betimes to live a Religious Life; and the sooner you begin, the more pleasant it will be; 'Tis best Travelling in a Morning. Would you rejoice, O young People, in your Youth, and have your Hearts to cheer you in the Days of your Youth, do not walk in the Way of your corrupt and carnal Hearts, but in the Way of God's Commandments, for he knows what's good for you, better than you do yourselves; Do not walk in the Sight of your Eyes, for the Eyes are apt to fly upon that which is not, but live by Faith, that Faith which being the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen will lead you to that which is; for Wisdom makes those that love her to inherit Substance, and fills their Treasures, and thence ariseth their true Satisfaction.

That which I would perswade you to, is to Walk in the Way of Wisdom, to be Sober-minded, to be Thoughtful about your Souls and your everlasting State, and get your Minds well Principled, and well Affected, and well inclin'd; Wisdom is the Principal Thing, therefore get Wisdom, and with all thy Gettings, get Understanding, That which I would perswade you with is the Pleasure

sanctness of this Way ; you cannot do better for yourselves than by a Religious Course of Life. My Son, if thine Heart be Wise, my Heart shall Rejoyce even mine, yea, my Reins shall Rejoyce if thy Lips, out of the abundance of thine Heart speak right Things, But that is not all, not only my Heart shall Rejoyce, but thy own shall.

Prov. 23. 15,
16.

I wish you would see, and seriously consider the two Rivals that are making Court to you for your Souls, for your best Affections, *Christ and Satan*, and act Wisely in disposing of yourselves, and make such a Choice as you will afterwards Reflect upon with Comfort—You are now at the turning Time of Life, Turn right now, and you are made for ever.—*Wisdom saith, who so is Simple let him turn in to me, and she will cure him of his Simplicity ; Folly saith, who so is Simple let him turn in to me, and she will take Advantage of his Simplicity ; Now let him come whose Right your Hearts are, and give them him, and you shall have them again more your own.*

Ecc. 9. 4. 16.

That you may determine well between these two Competitors, for the Throne in your Souls.

First, See the Folly of carnal, sinful Pleasures, and abandon them ; you will never be in Love with the Pleasures of Religion, till you are perswaded to fall out with forbidden Pleasures. The Enjoyment of the Delights of Sense suits best with that Age, the Appetite

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towards them is then most Violent ; Mirth, Sport, Plays, Dainties are the Idols of young People, they are therefore call'd *youthful Lusts* ; The Days Eccl. 12. 1. will come, the evil Days, when they themselves will say they have no Pleasure in them, like *Bazillai*, who when 2 Sam. 19. he is old can no more relish what he 35. Eats, and what he Drinks ; O that Reason, and Wisdom and Grace might make you as dead to them now, as Time and Days will make you after a while.

Will you believe one that try'd the utmost of what the Pleasures of Sense could do towards making a Man Happy ; He said of Laughter, it is mad, and Eccl. 2. 2. of Mirth what doth it ; And that 7. 3. sorrow is better than Laughter. *Moses* knew what the Pleasures of the Court were, and yet chose rather to suffer affliction Heb. 11. 25. with the People of God, than to continue in the snare of them ; And you must make the same Choice ; for you will never cordially embrace the Pleasures of Religion, till you have renounc'd the Pleasures of Sin. Covenant against them ; therefore, and Watch against them.

If you would live, and go in the way of Understanding, you must forsake the Foolish. Take heed of the Way both of the Evil Man, and of the Strange Woman ; Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away. Look upon sinful Pleasures as mean and much below you ; Look upon them as vile and much against

against you, and do not only despise them, but dread them, and have even the Garments spotted with the Fleſh.

Secondly, Be convince'd of the Pleaſure of Wiſdom's Ways, and come and try them. You are, it may be, prejudic'd againſt Religion as a melancholy thing, but as John 1. 46. Philip ſaid to Nathaniel, Come and ſee. Believe it poſſible that there may be a Pleaſure in Religion, which you have not yet thought of. When Religion is look'd upon at a Diſtance, we ſee not that Pleaſure in it, which we ſhall certainly find when we come to be better acquainted with it. Peter Martyr in a Sermon, illuſtrated this by this Compariſon (and it prov'd a means of the Converſion of the Marqueſs of Vico;) He that looks upon Perſons Dancing at a diſtance, would think they were Mad, but let him come nearer, and obſerve how they take every Step by Rule, and keep Time with the Muſick, he will not only be pleas'd with it, but inclin'd to joyn with them.

Come and take Chriſt's Yoke upon you, and you will find it eaſy; Try the Pleaſure there is in the Knowledge of God and Jeſus Chriſt, and in Converſe with Spiritual and Eternal Things; Try the Pleaſure of Seriousneſs, and Self-denial, and you'll find it far exceeds that of Vanity and Self-indulgence. Try the Pleaſure of Meditation on the Word of God, of Prayer and Praise, and Sabbath-Sanctification, and you will think you have made a happy Change

Change of the Pleasure of Vain and Carnal Mirth for these true Delights.

Make this Tryal by these four Rules.

1. That *Man's Chief End is to glorify God and enjoy him.* Our Pleasures will be according to that which we pitch upon and pursue as our Chief End; If we can mistake so far, as to think 'tis our Chief End to Enjoy the World and the Flesh, and our Chief Business to serve them, the Delights of Sense will relish best with us, But if the World was made for Man, certainly Man was made for more than the World; And if God made Man, certainly he made him for himself; God then is our Chief Good, 'tis our Business to serve and please him, and our Happiness to be accepted of him.

And if so, and we believe so, nothing will be a greater Pleasure to us, than that which we have reason to think will be pleasing to him. If we do, indeed, look upon God as our Chief Good, we shall make him our Chief Joy, our Exceeding Joy; if we consider that we were made capable of the Pleasure of Conversing with God in this World, and seeing him and enjoying him in another; we cannot but think that we wretchedly disparage ourselves, when we take up with the mean and sordid Pleasures of Sense as our Felicity, especially if we forego all Spiritual and Eternal Pleasures for them; as certainly we do, and give up all our Ex-

Psa: 93. 4

pedations

Heb. 12.16. expectations of them, if we place our Happiness in these present Delights; And we are guilty of a greater Absurdity than that which profane Esau was guilty of, who for a Mess of Pottage, sold his Birthright.

2. That the Soul is the Man, and that's best for us that is best for our Souls. Learn to think meanly of this Flesh, by which we are ally'd to the Earth, and the inferior Creatures; it is formed out of the Dust, it is Dust, and it is hastning to the Dust; and then the things that gratify it will not be much Esteem'd as of any great Moment; Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats, but God shall destroy both it and them, and therefore let us not make Idols of them.

Psal. 94.19. But the Soul is the noble part of us, by which we are ally'd to Heaven, and the World of Spirits, those Comforts therefore which delight the Soul, are the Comforts we should prize most, and give the Preference to, for the Soul's sake. Rational Pleasures are the best for a Man.

Prov. 14.10. 3. That the greatest Joy is that which a Stranger doth not intermeddle with; The best Pleasure is that which lies not under the Eye and Observation of the World, but which a Man has and bides in his own Bosom; and by which he enjoys himself, and keeps not only a peaceable, but a comfortable Possession of his own Soul; tho' he doth not, by Laughter or other Expressions of Joy, tell

tell them the Satisfaction he has. Christ had *Meat to eat which the World knew not* John 4. 32. of, and so have Christians to whom he is the *Bread of Life*.

4. That *all is well that ends everlastingly well*. That Pleasure ought to have the Preference, which is of the longest Continuance. The Pleasures of Sense are Withering and Fading, and leave a Sting behind them to those that plac'd their Happiness in them; But the Pleasures of Religion will abide with us; *In these is continuance*; Isa. 64. 5. they will not turn with the Wind, nor change with the Weather, but are *Meat which endures to everlasting Life*.

Reckon that the best Pleasure which will remain with you, and stand you in stead when you come to Dye; which will help to take off the Terror of Death, and allay its Pains. The Remembrance of sinful Pleasures will give us *killing Terrors*, but the Remembrance of religious Pleasures will give us *living Comforts in dying Moments*. They that live over *Belshazzar's Revels* may expect to receive the Summons of Death, with the same Confusion that he did, when *the Joints of his Loins* Dan. 5. 6, *were loosed, and his Knees smote one against another*; But they that live over *Hezekiah's Devotions* may receive them with the same Composure that he did, when with a great deal of Satisfaction he look'd back upon a well-spent Life, *Now Lord remember how I have walked* Isa. 36. 3. *before thee in Truth, and with an upright Heart.*

Secondly, *Let us that profess Religion, study to make it more and more pleasant to ourselves.* We see how much is done to make it so, let us not receive the Grace of God herein *in vain.* Let them that walk in Wisdom's Ways, *taste the Sweetness of them, and Relish it.* Christ's Service is perfect Freedom, let us not make a Drudgery of it, nor a Toil of such a Pleasure. We should not only be *reconcil'd* to our Duty, as we ought to be to our greatest Afflictions, and to *make the best* of it, But we should *Rejoyce* in our Duty, and *Sing at our Work.* If God intended that his Service should be a Pleasure to his Servants, let them concur with him herein, and not walk contrary to him.

Now in order to the making of our Religion Pleasant to us, more and more so, I shall give seven Directions,

1. *Let us always keep up good Thoughts of God, and carefully watch against bad Thoughts of him.*—As it is the original Error of many that are Loose and Careless in Religion, that they think God altogether such a one as themselves, as much a Friend to Sin as themselves, and as indifferent whether his Work be done or no; so it is the Error of many that are severe in their Religion, that they think God like themselves, a hard Master; They have such Thoughts of him, as Job had in an Hour of Temptation, when he look'd upon God as seeking Occasions against him, numbering his Steps, and

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and watching over his Sins, and taking Job. 13. 24.
 him for his Enemy. As if he were ex- — 14. 16.
 treme to mark Iniquities, and implacable
 to those that had offended, and not ac-
 cepting any Service that had in it the
 least Defect or Imperfection.

But the matter is not so, and we do
 both God and ourselves a great deal
 of Wrong, if we imagin it to be so;
 what could have been done more than
 God has done, to convince us that he Exod. 34. 6.
 is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, 7.
 and ready to forgive Sin when it is Re-
 pent of, I said I will confess my Ini- Psa. 32. 5.
 quity unto thee, and thou forgavest; And
 as ready to accept the Services that
 come from an upright Heart. He will
 not always chide, nor contend for ever.
 So far is he from taking Advantages
 against us, that he makes the best of us:
 where the Spirit is willing, he accepts
 that, and overlooks the Weakness of the
 Flesh. Let us deal with him according-
 ly; Look upon God as Love, and the
 God of Love, and then it will be plea-
 sant to us to hear from him, to speak
 to him, to converse with him, and to
 do him any Service.

It is true, God is great, and glori-
 ous, and jealous, and to be worshipped
 with Reverence and holy Fear, but is
 he not our Father? a tender gracious
 Father? Have we not an Advocate 2 Cor. 5. 19.
 with the Father? Was not God in
 Christ, reconciling the World to himself,
 and to all his Attributes and Relations
 to us, by shewing himself willing to be

reconcil'd to us, notwithstanding our Provocations. See him, therefore, upon a Throne of Grace, and come boldly to him, and that will make your Service of him pleasant.

2. Let us dwell much, by Faith, upon the Promises of God. What pleasant Lives should we lead, if we were but more intimately acquainted with those Declarations which God has made of his Good Will to Man, and the Assurances he has given of his Favor, and all the blessed Fruits of it to those who serve him faithfully. The Promises are many, and exceeding Great and Precious, suited to our Case, and accommodated to every Exigence; There are not only Promises to Grace, but Promises of Grace, Grace sufficient; And these Promises all *Yea* and *Amen* in Christ,

What do these Promises stand in our Bibles for, but to be made use of; Come then, and let us apply them to ourselves, and insert our own Names in them by Faith; what God said to *Abraham*, I am thy Shield, I am *El-Shaddai*, a God All-sufficient; what he said to *Joshua*, I will never fail thee nor forsake thee, he saith to me. What he saith to all that love him, that all things shall work for good to them, and to all that fear him, that no good Thing shall be wanting to them, he saith to me, and why should not I take the Comfort of it?

These Promises and the like, are Wells of Salvation, from which we may draw

Gen. 15. 1,
17. 1.

Josh. 1. 5.

Rom. 8. 28.

Psal. 34. 10.

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draw Water with Joy; and Breasts of Consolation from which we may suck, and be satisfy'd; They will be both our Strength, and our Song in the House of our Pilgrimage. So well-order'd is the Covenant of Grace in all Things, and so sure, that if having laid up our Portion in it, and so made it *all our Salvation*, we would but fetch our Maintenance from it, and so make it *all our Desire and Delight*, we should have in it a continual Feast, and should go on our Way rejoicing. 2 Sam. 23. 5. See Psa. 119. 111.

3. Let us order the Affairs of our Religion with Discretion. Many make Religion unpleasant to themselves, and discouraging to others, by their imprudent Management of it; making that Service to be a Burthen by the Circumstances of it, which in itself would be a Pleasure; doing Things out of Time, or tasking themselves above their Strength, and undertaking more than they can go through with, especially at first, which is like putting new Wine into old Bottles; or like over-driving the Flocks one Day. If we make the Yoke of Christ heavier than he has made it; we may thank ourselves that our Drawing in it becomes unpleasant. Solomon cautions us against being righteous overmuch, and making ourselves overwise, as that by which we may destroy ourselves, and put ourselves out of Con-
ceit with our Religion; There may be over-doing in well-doing, and then it becomes unpleasant.

But let us take our Religion as Christ hath settl'd it, and we shall find it *easy*. When the Ways of our Religion are Ways of *Wisdom* then they are Ways of *Pleasantness*; for the more *Wisdom* the more *Pleasantness*; that *Wisdom* which dwells with *Prudence*. — Wisdom will direct us to be *even* and *regular* in our Religion; to take Care that the Duties of our General and Particular Calling, the Business of our Religion, and our necessary Business in the World do not *interfere*, or *intrench* upon one another.

Ecc. 3. 11. 'Twill direct us to *time Duty aright*; for every thing is *beautiful* and *pleasant* in its *Season*; And Work is then *easy*, when we are in *Frame* for it.

4. Let us live in *Love*, and keep up *Christian Charity*, and the *Spiritual Communion of Saints*. If we would be of good *Comfort*, we must be of *one Mind*; And, therefore, the Apostle presseth *Brotherly Love* upon us, with an Argument taken from the *Consolations in Christ*, i. e. The *Comfort* that is in *Christianity*; As ever you hope to have the *Comfort* of your Religion, submit to that great Law of it, *Walk in Love*. For Behold how good, and how *pleasant* it is, how good in itself, and *pleasant* to us, for Brethren to dwell together in *Unity*. — The more *pleasing* we are to our Brethren, the more *pleasant* we shall be to ourselves.

Nothing makes our *Lives* more uncomfortable than *Strife* and *Contention*; *Wo is me that I dwell among those that*

that *bate Peace*. 'Tis bad being among those that are dispos'd to quarrel, and worse having in ourselves a Disposition to quarrel. The Resentments of Contempt put upon us are uneasy enough, and Contrivances to revenge it much more so. And nothing makes our *Religion* more uncomfortable, than Strifes and Contentions *about that*. We forfeit, and lose the Pleasure of it, if we entangle ourselves in *perverse Disputings* about it.

But by Holy Love we enjoy our Friends, which will add to the Pleasure of Enjoying God in this World. Love itself *sweetens* the Soul, and revives it, and as it is the Loadstone of Love, it fetcheth in the further Pleasure and Satisfaction of being *belov'd*; and so it is a *Heaven upon Earth*, for what is the Happiness and Pleasure of Heaven, but that there Love reigns in Perfection. Then we have most Peace in our Bosoms, when we are most peaceably dispos'd towards our Brethren.

5. Let us *be much in the Exercise of Holy Joy, and employ ourselves much in Praise*. Joy is the Heart of Praise, as Praise is the Language of Joy; Let us engage ourselves to these, and quicken ourselves in these. God has made *these* our Duty, by these to make all the other Parts of our Duty pleasant to us; and for that End we should abound much in them, and attend upon God with *Joy and Praise*. Let us not crowd our spiritual Joys into a Corner of our Hearts, nor our Thankful Praises into

a Corner of our Prayers, but give both *Scope* and *Vent* to both.

Let us live a Life of *Delight* in God, and love to think of him as we do of one whom we love and value. Let the *Flowing* in of every Stream of Comfort *lead* us to the Fountain; and in every thing that is *grateful* to us, let us *taste* that the Lord is *gracious*. Let the *Drying* up of every Stream of Comfort *drive* us to the Fountain; and let us rejoyce the more in God for our being *depriv'd* of that, which we us'd to rejoyce in.

Let us be *frequent* and *large* in our *Thanksgivings*; 'Twill be pleasant to us to *recount* the Favours of God, and thus to make some *Returns* for them; tho' poor and mean, yet such as God will graciously accept. We should have more Pleasure in our Religion, if we had but learn'd in *every thing* to give *Thanks*, for that takes out more than *half* the Bitterness of our Afflictions, that we can see Cause even to be *thankful* for them; And it infuseth more than a *double* Sweetness into our Enjoyments, that they furnish us with Matter for that Excellent Heav'nly Work of Praise. Sing Praises unto his Name, for it is pleasant; comfortable as well as comely.

1 Thel. 5. 18.

Psal. 135. 3.

6. Let us *act* in a constant Dependence upon Jesus Christ. Religion would be much more pleasant, if we did but cleave more closely to Christ in it, and do all in his Name; The more precious Christ

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Christ is to us, the more *pleasants* will every Part of our Work be ; and therefore, *Believing* in Christ is often express'd by our *Rejoicing in him*. We may rejoyce *in God*, through Christ as the Mediator between us and God ; may rejoyce in our Communion with God, when it is kept up thro' Christ ; may rejoyce in hope of Eternal Life ; when we see this Life *in the Son* ; *He that hath the Son of God hath Life*, i. e. 12. *1 John 5, 11,* he has Comfort.

There is that in Christ, and in his Undertaking and Performances for us, which is sufficient to satisfy all our Doubts, to silence all our Fears, and to balance all our Sorrows. He was appointed to be the *Consolation of Israel*, and he will be so to us, when we have learnt not to look for that in ourselves, which is to be had in him only, and to make use of his Mediation in every thing wherein we have to do with God. When we rejoyce in the Righteousness of Christ, and in his Grace and Strength, rejoyce in his Satisfaction and Intercession, rejoyce in his Dominion and Universal Agency and Influence, and in the Progress of his Gospel, and the Conversion of Souls to him, and please ourselves with Prospects of his Second Coming, we have then a Joy, not only which no Man taketh from us, but which will encrease more and more, and of the *Increase of Christ's Government*, and therefore of *that Peace there shall be no End*.— Our Songs of Joy are then

then most Pleasant, when the Burthen of them is, *None but Christ, None but Christ.*

7. Let us *Converse much with the Glory that is to be Reveal'd.* They that by Faith send their Hearts and best Affections before them to Heaven, while they are here on this Earth, may in return fetch thence some of those Joys and Pleasures that are at *God's Right-Hand.* That which goes up in *Vapors* of Holy Desire, tho' *Insensible*, in *Groanings which cannot be utter'd*, will come down again in *Dews* of Heavenly Consolations, that will make the Soul *as a watered Garden.*

Let us look much to the End of our Way, how glorious it will be, and that will help to make our Way Pleasant. This *abundantly satisfies* the Saints, and is the *Fatness of God's House on Earth.* This makes them now to *Drink of the River of God's Pleasures*, that with him is the *Fountain of Life*, whence all these Streams come, and in his *Light* they hope to see *Light*, everlasting Light. By frequent Meditations on that Rest which remains for the People of God, we now enter into that Rest, and partake of the Comfort of it.

Psal. 36. 8, 9.
Heb. 4. 3.

Our Hopes of that Happiness through Grace, would be very much strengthned, and our Evidences for it clear'd up insensibly, if we did but *converse* more with it, and the Discoveries made of it in the Scripture. We may have *Foretastes* of Heavenly Delights,

lights, while we are here on Earth, Clusters from Canaan, while we are yet in this Wilderness, and no Pleasure comparable to that which these afford. That's the sweetest Joy within us, which is borrowed from the Joy set before us. And we deprive ourselves very much of the Comfort of our Religion, in not having our Eye more to that Joy. We rejoyce most Triumphantly, and with the greatest Degrees of Holy Glorifying, when we rejoyce in Hope of the Glory of God: In this our Heart is glad, and our Glory rejoyceth. Rom. 6. 2.
Psa. 16. 4.

Thirdly, Let us make it appear, that we have, indeed, found Wisdom's Ways to be Pleasantness, and her Paths Peace. If we have experienced this Truth, let us evidence our Experiences, and not only in Word, but in Deed, bear our Testimony to the Truth of it. Let us live as those that believe the Sweetness of Religion, not because we are told it, but because we have tasted it. 1 John 1. 2.

If so be then (to borrow the Apostle's Words) *We have tasted that the Lord is gracious*, if we have, indeed, found it a pleasant Thing to be Religious, 1 Pet. 2. 3.

1. Let our Hearts be much enlarg'd in all Religious Exercises, and all Instances of Gospel Obedience. The more Pleasant the Service of God is, the more we should abound in it. When God enlargeth our Hearts with his Consolations, he expects that we should run the Way of his Commandments, that we should

should exert ourselves in our Duty with more *Vigor*, and press forward the more earnestly towards *Perfection*.

This should make us forward to every good Work; and ready to close with all Opportunities of serving God, and doing Good; That which we take a *Pleasure in*, we need not to be twice call'd to. If indeed the *Hearts* of those
 Psal. 105. 3. *rejoyce that seek the Lord*, then when God saith, *seek ye my Face*, how steadily should our Hearts answer at the first Word, *Thy Face, Lord, will we seek*; and how glad will they be, when it is said
 Psal. 27. 8. *unto us, Let us go to the House of the Lord*. This should make us forward to Acts of Charity, that there is a Pleasure in doing Good; and we shall reflect with Comfort upon it, that we have done something that will turn to the Honour of God, and our own Account.

This should make us *Lively* in our Duty; the Heart fix'd in Hearing the Word, and in Prayer and Praise. Those that take Delight in Musick, how doth it engage them; How do all the Marks of a close Application of Mind appear in their Countenance and Carriage, and shall not we by our *Attending on the Lord without Distraction*, make it to appear, that we attend upon him with *Delight*, and are in our Element when we are in his Service. Let this be my *Rest for ever*; Here let me dwell all the Days of my Life.

This

being RELIGIOUS.

This should keep us *Constant* and *Unwearied* in the Work and Service of God. What is really our *Delight*, we are not soon *weary of*. If we delight in approaching to God, we will *seek him Daily*; and make it our daily Work to honour him. If Meditation and Prayer be *sweet*, let them be our *Daily Exercise*; and let this *bind* our Souls with a Bond to God, and the *Sacrifice* as *with Cords to the Horns of the Altar*. With this we should answer all *Temptations to Apostacy*; shall I quit so good a Master, so good a Service? *Intreat me not to leave Christ, or to turn from following after him*; for it is good to be here. *Here let us make Tabernacles*. *Whither else shall we go, but to him that has the Words of Eternal Life?* Ruth 1. 16. Mat. 17. 4.

2. Let our whole Conversation be *cheerful*, and *Melancholy* be banish'd. Are the Ways of Religion Pleasant? Let us be *Pleasant* in them, both to ourselves, and to those about us. As for those who are yet in a State of Sin and Wrath, they have reason to be *Melancholy*, let the *Sinners in Zion* be afraid, be afflicted, Joy is forbidden Fruit to them, *what have they to do with Peace?* *Rejoyce not O Israel, for Joy as other Peoples, for thou hast gone a Whoring from thy God.* Hos. 9. 14.

But those, who through Grace, are call'd out of Darkness into a *marvellous Light*, have Cause to be *Cheerful*, and should have Hearts to be so. *Arise, for thy Light is come*; Is the Sun
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of Righteousness risen upon us? Let us arise and look forth *as the Morning with the Morning*. That Comfort which Christ directs to our Souls, let us reflect *Ha. 52. 1, 2.* back upon others. And as our Light is come, so is our Liberty; Art thou loosed from the Bands of thy Neck? O Captive Daughier of Zion, awake, awake, put on thy Strength, put on thy beautiful Garments, and shake thyself from the Dust, arise and sit down, O Jerusalem.

Tho' vain and carnal Mirth is both a great Sin, and a great Snare, yet there is a holy Chearfulness and Pleasanthness of Conversation, which will not only consist very well with serious Godliness, but greatly promotes it in ourselves, and greatly adorns it, and recommends it to others. A merry Heart, Solomon saith, *Prov. 17. 22.* doth good like a Medicine; and maketh fat the Bones; while a broken Spirit doth hurt like a Poison, and drieth the Bones. Christians should endeavour to keep up a chearful Temper, and not indulge themselves in that which is Sadning and Disquieting to the Spirit; And they should shew, it in all holy Conversation, that those they converse with, may see, they did not renounce Pleasure, when they embrac'd Religion.

I am sure, none have so much Reason to rejoyce as good People have, nor so much done for them to encourage their Joy, and therefore to allude to that of *Jonadab to Amnon, why art thou, being the King's Son, lean from Day to Day?* Are we in Prosperity? therefore let

let us be *cheerful*, in gratitude, to the God of our Mercies, who expects that we should *serve him with Joyfulness*, and *Gladness of Heart*, in the Abundance of all Things, and justly takes it ill if we do not.

Tristis es, & salix? sciat hoc Fortuna cavelo, Ingratum dicet te (Lupe) si scierit. Mart.

Are we in Affliction? yet let us be *cheerful*, that we make it appear our Happiness is not laid up in the Creature, nor our Treasures on Earth. If it is the Privilege of Christians to rejoice in Tribulation, let them not throw away their Privilege, but glory in it, and make use of it. Let the Joy of the Lord that hath *infus'd* itself into our Hearts *diffuse* itself into all our Converse. Go thy way, eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine; nay, if thou should'st be reduc'd to that, Drink fair Water, with a merry Heart, if thou hast good ground to hope that in Christ Jesus, God now accepteth thy Works; And this Joy of the Lord will be thy Strength.

3. Let us look with Contempt upon the Pleasures of Sense, and with Abhorrence upon the Pleasures of Sin. The more we have tasted of the Delights of Heaven, the more our Mouths should be put out of Taste to the Delights of this Earth. Let not those who have been feasted with the Milk and Honey of Canaan, hanker after the Garlick and Onions of Egypt.

Let us keep at a Distance from all forbidden Pleasures; There's a Hook under those Baits, a Snake under the green Grass; a Rock under those smooth Waters, on which Multitudes have split. We must so dread the Drunkard's Pleasure, as not to look up-
 Prov. 23. 31. on the Wine when it is Red; so dread the Pleasures of the Adulterer, as not to
 Mat. 5. 28. look upon a Woman to Lust after her; for these Pleasures of Sin not only are but for a Season, but at the last they bite like a Serpent, and sting like an Adder. Either Spiritual Pleasures will deaden the Force of the Pleasures of Sin, or the Pleasures of Sin will spoil the Relish of Spiritual Pleasures.

Let us keep up a holy Indifferency, even to the lawful Delights of Sense; and take heed of loving them more than God. The Eye that has look'd at the Sun is dazzled to every thing else; Have we beheld the Beauty of the Lord? Let us see and own, how little Beauty there is in other things. If we be tempted to do any thing unbecoming us, by the Allurements of Pleasure, we may well say, offer these things to those that know no better; But we do; and will never leave Fountains of living Water, for Cisterns of puddle Water.

4. Let not our Hearts envy Sinners :
 Prov. 23. 17. Envy ariseth from an Opinion that the State of others is better than our own, which we grudge and are displeased at; and wish ourselves in their Condition. Good People are often caution'd

on'd against this Sin; *Be not then envious against evil Men, nor desire to be with them;* for if there be all this Pleasure in Religion, and we have experienc'd it, surely we would not exchange Condition with any Sinner, even in his best Estate. Prov. 24. 1. Psal. 37. 1.

Envy not Sinners their outward Prosperity, their Wealth and Abundance which puts them into a Capacity of having all the Delights of Sense, wound up to the Heights of Pleasurableness; *Tho' they lye upon Beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their Couches, and eat the Lambs out of the Flocks, and the Calves out of the midst of the Stall, tho' they chant to the Sound of the Viol, drink Wine in Bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief Ointments.* Yet those have no Reason to envy them, whose Souls dwell at Ease in God, who are fed with the Bread of Life, the true Manna, Angels Food, and drink of the Water of Life freely, that make Melody with their Hearts to the Lord, and are made to bear from him Joy and Gladness; and have receiv'd the Anointing of the Spirit. If we have relish'd the Delights of Religion, we will say as David, *Let us not eat of their Dainties.* Amos 6. 4. Psal. 148. 4.

Envy not Sinners the Liberty they take to sin; that they can allow themselves in the full Enjoyment of these Pleasures, which we cannot think of without Horror; But have not we then the Enjoyment of those Pleasures, which

are infinitely better; and which the *ore* Strangers to? We cannot have both, and of the two, are not *ours*, without Dispute, preferable to *theirs*, and why then should we envy them? Their *Pleasures* are *enslaving*, ours *enlarging*; Theirs *debasing* to the Soul, ours *ennobling*; Theirs *surfeiting*, ours *satisfying*; Theirs *offensive* to God, ours *pleasing* to him; Theirs will *end in Pain and Bitterness*, ours will be *perfected in endless Joys*; And what Reason then, have we to envy them?

5. *Let not our Spirits sink, or be dejected, under the Afflictions of this present Time.* We disparage our Comforts in God, if we lay too much to Heart our Crosses in the World; And therefore, hereby let us evidence, that being satisfy'd of God's *loving Kindness*, we are satisfy'd with it. Let us look upon that as sufficient to balance all the *Unkindnesses* of Men. They that *value* themselves upon God's *Smiles*, ought not to *vex* themselves at the *World's Frowns*. The Light of God's Countenance can shine through the thickest Clouds of the Troubles of this present Time; and therefore, we should *walk in the Light of the Lord*, even then when as to our outward Condition we *sit in Darkness*.

We manifest that we have found true Delight and Satisfaction in the Service of God, and Communion with him; when the *Pleasure* of that will make the bitterest Cup of Affliction, that our Father puts into our Hand not only *passable*, but *pleasant*; so that like blessed *Paul*,

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when we are *as sorrowful*, yet we may be *always rejoicing*, and may take *Pleasure* in *Infirmities* and *Reproaches*, because tho' for the present they are not joyous but grievous, yet when afterwards, they yield the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness they become not grievous, but truly joyous. *Blessed is the Man whom thou chastenest.*

6. Let the *Pleasure* we have found in *Religion*, dispose us to be liberal and charitable to the poor and distressed. The pleasing Sense we have of God's Bounty to us, by which he has done so much to make us easy, should engage us bountifully to distribute to the *Necessities* of *Saints*, according to our Ability; not only to keep them from perishing, but to make them easy; and that they may rejoice as well as we. Chearfulness that enlargeth the Heart, should open the Hand too. Paul observes it concerning the Churches of Macedonia, who were very ready to give for the Relief of the poor Saints at Jerusalem, that it was the *Abundance* 2 Cor. 8. 21 of their Joy, their spiritual Joy, their Joy in God, that abounded unto the *Riches* of their *Liberality*.

When the People of Israel are commanded to rejoice in every good thing, which Deut. 26. 11 God had given them, they are com- 12. manded also to give freely to the *Levite*, the *Stranger*, the *Fatherless*, and the *Widow*, that they may eat, and be filled. And when upon a particular Occasion, they are directed to eat the *Fat*, and drink the *Sweet*, Neh. 8. 10 at the same time they are directed to send

send Portions to them, for whom nothing is prepar'd; And then the Joy of the Lord will be their Strength. By our being charitable we should show that we are chearful; that we chearfully taste God's Goodness in what we have, and trust his Goodness for what we may hereafter want.

7. Let us do what we can, to bring others to partake of the same Pleasures in Religion that we have tasted; especially those that are under our Charge. It adds very much to the Pleasure of an Enjoyment, to communicate of it to others, especially when the Nature of it is such, that we have never the less, but the more rather, for others sharing in it. — What good Tidings we hear that are of common Concern, we desire that others may hear them, and be glad too. He that has but found a lost Sheep, calls his Friends and his Neighbours to rejoyce with him, much more he that has found Christ, and found Comfort in him; who can say, *Not only come and rejoyce with me, but come and partake with me; for yet there is Room, enough for all, tho' never so numerous, enough for each, tho' never so necessitous and craving.*

Luke 15. 6.

Jud. 14. 8.

When Sampson had found Honey in the Carcass of the Lion, he brought some of it to his Parents, that they might partake with him; Thus when we have found a Day in God's Courts better than a thousand, we should invite others into those Courts, by telling them what God

Psal. 66. 16.

has done for our Souls; and how willing he

he is to do the same for their's, if they in like manner apply themselves to him. When *Andrew* with a surprizing Pleasure had found the *Messiah*, he cannot rest 'till he has brought his Brother *Peter* to him; nor *Philip* 'till he hath brought his Friend *Nathaniel*. They that are feasted with the Comforts of God's House, should not covet to eat their Morsel alone; but be willing to communicate of their spiritual Things.

8. Let us be willing to dye, and leave this World. We have Reason to be ashamed of ourselves, that we who have not only laid up our Treasure above, but fetch our Pleasures thence, yet are as much in Love with our present State, and as loth to think of quitting it, as if our Treasure and Pleasure, and All were wrapt up in the Things of Sense and Time. The Delights of Sense entangle us, and hold us here; These are the Things that make us loth to dye; as One once said, viewing his fine House and Gardens. And are these Things sufficient to court our Stay here, when God calls to Arise, and Depart for this is not our Rest. Mic. 2. To

Let us not be afraid to remove from a World of Sense to a World of Spirits, since we have found the Pleasures of Sense not worthy to be compar'd with Spiritual Pleasures. When in Old Age, which is one of the Vallies of the Shadow of Death, we can no longer relish the Delights of the Body, but they become senseless and tasteless, as they were to *Barzillai*,

Eccl. 12. 1. *zillai*, yet we need not call those *Evil Days*, and *Years*, in which we have no *Pleasure*, if we have walk'd, and persever'd in *Wisdom's Ways*; for if so, we may then in *Old Age*, look back with *Pleasure* upon a *Life well-spent on Earth*, as *Hezekiah* did, and look forward with more *Pleasure*, upon a *Life to be better spent in Heaven*.

And when we have received a *Sentence of Death* within ourselves, and see the *Day approaching*, the *Pleasure* we have in loving *God*, and believing in *Christ*, and in the *Expressions of Holy Joy and Thankfulness*, should make even a sick *Bed* and a *Death Bed* easy; The *Saints* shall be joyful in *Glory*, and shall sing aloud *Psal. 149. 5.* upon their *Beds*, those *Beds* to which they are confin'd, and from which they are removing to their *Graves*; their *Beds* in the *Darkness*. Our *Religion*, if we be faithful to it, will furnish us with *living Comforts* in *dying Moments*, sufficient to balance the *Pains of Death*, and take off the *Terror of it*; and to enable us to triumph over it, *O Death, where is thy Sting?* Let us then evidence our *Experiences of the Pleasures of Religion*, by living above the inordinate *Love of Life*, and *Fear of Death*.

Lastly, Let us long for the *Perfection of these Spiritual Pleasures in the Kingdom of Glory*. When we come thither, and not 'till then, they will be perfected; while we are here as we know and love but in part, so we rejoyce but in part, even our *Spiritual Joys* here, have their

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Damps and Allays; We mix Tears and Tremblings with them: But in Heaven, there is a *Fulness of Joy* without Mixture, and *Pleasures for evermore* without Period or Diminution. — Christ's Servants will there *enter into the Joy of their Lord*, and it shall be *Everlasting Joy*. Isa. 35. 10.

And what are the Pleasures in the *Way of Wisdom* compar'd with those at the *End of the Way*? If a Complacency in the Divine Beauty and Love be so pleasant while we are *in the Body*, and are *absent from the Lord*, what will it be when we have put off the Body, and go to be *present with the Lord*? If a Day in God's Courts, and a few Minutes spent there in his Praises be so pleasant, what will an Eternity within the Vail be, among them that *dwell in his House* above, and are *still praising him*? If the *Earnest of our Inheritance* be so comfortable, what will the Inheritance itself be?

Now wherever there is Grace it will be aiming at, and pressing towards its own Perfection; 'Tis a *Well of Water* John 4. 14. *springing up to Eternal Life*; This, therefore, we should be *longing for*. Our Love to God in this World is Love in Motion, in Heaven 'twill be Love at Rest; O when shall that *Sabbatism* come, which *remains for the People of God*! Here we have the Pleasure of looking towards God, O when shall we come, and appear before him! Our Lord Jesus, when at his Last Passover, which he earnestly desir'd

desir'd to eat with his Disciples, he had
 Mac. 26. 29. drunk of the *Fruit of the Vine*, he speaks
 as One that long'd to drink it *New in the*
Kingdom of his Father; 'Tis very plea-
 sant to serve Christ here, but to depart,
 and to be with Christ is far better. Now
 1 John 3. 2. are we the Sons of God, and 'tis very plea-
 sant to think of that; But It doth not
 yet appear what we shall be; Something
 there is in Reserve, which we are kept
 in Expectation of; We are not yet at
 Home, but should long to be there,
 and keep up holy Desires of that *Glory*
to be reveal'd, that we may be quickned
 as long as we are here to press towards
 the Mark for the Prize of the High Calling.

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 servation: or, The Folly of De-
 spising our own Souls, and our own
 Ways. Open'd in two Sermons to young
 People; the former on Prov. 15. 32.
 the latter on Prov. 19. 16.
 Sober-Mindedness press'd upon young
 People. In a Discourse on Tin. 2. 6.
 Christ's Favour to little Children,
 open'd and improv'd: In a Sermon
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